

o·blēk



o·blēk

The boy stood on the burning deck
Whence all but he had fled;
The flame that lit the battle's wreck
Shone round him o'er the dead.

from *Casabianca*, Dorothea Hemans

⁹**oblique** (o•blēk) *Oblique perspective: fig.* Not taking the straight or direct course to the end in view; not going straight to the point; indirectly stated or expressed; indirect. 1432-50 tr. HIGDEN (Rolls)IV.407 The office of a poete is to transmute those thynges whiche be doen truly in to other similitudes in oblike figuraciones with pulcritude. 1606 SHAKS *Tr & Cr* v.i.60 The primatiue Statue, and oblique memoriall of Cuckolds. 1778 JOHNSON in Boswell 25 Apr., All censure of a man's self is oblique praise.

o•blēk/9

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to celebrate the 30th anniversary of *Burning Deck*.

CONTENTS

JOHN HAWKES	An Offering	9
LYN HEJINIAN	Mercury	15
WILLIAM BRONK	Five Poems	19
BARBARA GUEST	Otranto	25
ROBERT ASHLEY	Ideas from the Church	33
LARRY EIGNER	Four Uncollected Poems	37
EMMANUEL HOCQUARD	Elegy 7 (trans. Geoffrey Young)	43
BARBARA EINZIG	from <i>Madame Bovary</i>	59
JOHN YAU	Six Odes to my Desk	63
GEORGE TYSH	from <i>Reproductions</i>	71
SUSAN HOWE	from <i>The Nonconformist Memorial</i>	77
ROBERT CREELEY	Sonnets	81
ISABELLE BALADINE HOVALD	What Remains of the Scene (trans. K. Waldrop)	85
HARRY MATHEWS	Keith and Rosmarie Waldrop Exchange Poems	91
JACKSON MAC LOW	For Rosmarie and Keith	95
RAY DiPALMA	Annotations Tropes and Lacunae of the Itoku Master	111
CHARLES BERNSTEIN & JOHANNA DRUCKER	Flying to Chicago with Waldrops on Wing	117
CRAIG WATSON	from <i>E²</i>	121
MARGARET JOHNSON	Travel in the West	129
CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON	Two Poems	135

SPENCER SELBY	Rough Tongue	139
LISSA McLAUGHLIN	Visiting the Dead	143
JOHN ASHBERRY	from <i>Flow Chart</i>	147
TOM MANDEL	Ut Pictura Poesis	153
BRUCE ANDREWS	from <i>Moebius</i>	159
MARJORIE WELISH	Tablet	163
RAY RAGOSTA	from <i>The Varieties of Religious Experience</i> , III	167
MICHAEL GIZZI	Le Cahier du Refuge	171
DALLAS WIEBE	Two Poems	175
ROSMARIE & KEITH WALDROP	If Volume One	179

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In Memoriam:
Edmond Jabès
1912 – 1991

“Another day passes to give me a soul,” said Reb Adon. “For death is at the threshold.

“Did not Reb Idal write: ‘The heart is the soul of the dead?’”

“Do you mean to say we have no soul?” asked one of his disciples.

“We prepare ourselves for having one,” replied Reb Adon, “like the pregnant woman for her child.”

“In that case,” continued the disciple, “when will we enjoy our soul?”

“When we will be one,” said Reb Adon, “when we are born.”

Edmond Jabès, from *The Book of Questions*



JOHN HAWKES

AN OFFERING TO KEITH AND ROSMARIE WALDROP:
THIS EXCERPT FROM
OLD HORSE: A REMINISCENCE

Once, long ago, for the first and only time, I saw Keith and Rosmarie taken aback. The occasion was the moment of our leave-taking from one of the bounteous dinners they had hosted of a winter's night. Sophie and I stood at the door, bundled against the cold outside, reluctant as we always were to leave. It was then that it came to me and that suddenly I heard myself saying to Rosmarie and Keith that, for me, all the reality that mattered was in the world that was theirs. Then and for an instant only came their change of expression, the startled pause, the look of disbelief – of anxiety even – in the eye. Reality? In their house, their lives, their art? Never, they seemed to say, nonsense! Reality was not their word. But then they merely demurred, laughed, saw us off with typical wit and humor. Yet I meant that exclaimed opinion then, and still do. In their rooms quilted with books and art, in the sound of the printing press from the basement below – sometimes I think it keeps itself going even when unattended! – in the fire on the hearth, in the talk, when all at once their living room becomes a room in Paris or Aix-en-Provence or Tübingen, and in all the friends they gather together and most of all in their poetry and their prose – theirs is indeed a reality like no other, the true gift they've given us all. It's the gift of Burning Deck, of course, the gift of themselves and what they make with words.

So now, as we celebrate them both, I hope that Keith and Rosmarie will accept the following brief passage – in it my narrating horse-in-progress begins to recall the joy of his youth – as an old friend's modest offering of thanks for their presence in the sepulchral city.

More apple trees, a succession of white gates and fences, a glimpse of the brook after which Millbank was named, the rolling emptiness of the back field. And the further we went the more I was aware of my considerable height, my untried imposing stature, the lightness that was obviously mine on my long legs, the rippling of strong muscles in my chest and flanks and hindquarters. The tip of my dark tail nearly touched the ground and swung to my springy rhythm. I was a young stallion whose handsome appearance, it suddenly occurred to me, belied his bad character. Yet surely the special solace of spite and mischievous behavior could not be so easily destroyed, and in reaction against the pride I had for the moment taken in my rare self I swerved, arched my neck, broke into an erratic jogging meant to convey defiance. But Liz paid none of this any attention and I subsided into reluctant enjoyment of the morning.

She turned me loose, I glanced once over my shoulder and trotted off until Liz was out of sight and the otherwise empty pasture mine.

After a few limbering minutes I slowed my pace and stopped. I listened, I relaxed into this uncanny state of things, I convinced myself of the safety inherent in a landscape in which, for some reason or other, or perhaps none at all, I was free to take my ease and to drift, to muse, to graze. I lowered my head, the grass was sweetened with a wet chill, I could hear the dawn still waiting to come to light on the horizon. I could hardly be suspicious or on my guard in a terrain of such tranquility, alone I could not have been more my own center of attention. I forgot myself, I became myself. I heard my own footfall, my own breath. I moved on slowly, paused again to graze. I was both insignificant and monumental, for once at liberty to eat my fill of the very world through which, unaccompanied, I moved. I could smell the apples yet to come, taste their wet bitterness as if I had eaten them before they

had had a chance to come to life, to grow, to drop from the tree. All of the world's barns might have been empty, all the world's horses dispersed to distant corners, all the world of the horse rid at last of humans who, from the time they *first encountered and then* captured us until now, have been the cause of our troubles. So I strolled and dreamed, fleetingly remembered a story I had once heard from Rose about a clairvoyant, a human who upon asking an old horse why he was so hopelessly bad tempered, was surprised to hear the old horse say that his entire life had been shaped and controlled by humans, that he had never had a day of his own, an urge of his own, a will of his own, and that he could not help but despise all those who had robbed him of the nature he had never had. Was that old horse the horse I would become? I remembered that story, I heard his voice, then it faded in the tangible vacancy I was ingesting. Safe for now, I thought, and free. No humans, no horses for that matter. How enjoyable it was to nurse my grievances in the flesh of my well-being, the while feeling only the faintest need to keep myself alert for trouble.

A dawn for which no creature waited, one horse suspended in the absence of many. And it was not trouble that was in store for me but its opposite. Yes, it was joy that replenished my poisoned well that morning, the *purest and least expected happiness* which, it goes without saying, I did not deserve, could not have anticipated, did not even want yet certainly could not deny once it was mine.

I stopped in my tracks, raised my head, I felt my mane and tail lifted by some sylvan current of air I could not feel. Something had changed, something was wrong, as I thought, and all the alertness I could muster was no match for this intrusion. My being was concentrated in my distended nostrils, I breathed in the enigmatic smell. What was it? Where was it coming from? I filled my nose, my head, my lungs, my selfhood with this pale and disturbing scent. Without moving I readied myself for retreat or cautious progress toward its hidden source. Flight or investigation, alarm or adventure, which would it be?

Cinnamon. Pepper. Sugar. Blood. The longer I smelled it, the stronger that smell became, and the more tyrannical, the more alluring. All my senses were attuned to its promise, there was no denying the pungency of this living spice. Poised to flee, poised to advance, in eager indecision I stood rooted where I was, nose high in the air, nostrils twitching, head held as rigidly as the rest of me except for slight movements to the left, to the right as dictated by the smallest variations in the direction of that ever-present scent. The sweet fuming breath of feed in a bucket, or the dark smell of algae on still water, or the intangible aroma of ripe grain in the field, or the smell of molten iron, or the salty smell of a long wet gash in a horse's shoulder, or the acidic smell of the fear that emanates from the flesh of certain humans in the presence of a hot-blooded horse — what came to me now like a clear thread through the neutral atmosphere was suggestive of all this olfactory excitation and none of it. I sniffed, I savored what I sniffed, vaguely I thought of the eternal cycles of equine life. Then it came to me, a sound almost inaudible but as strong in its way as the smell from which it was inseparable — the sound of whinnying. The sound of another horse. The sound, I was forced to admit to myself, of a filly. In my mind's eye I saw the invisible creature standing as tall as myself and shining in colors as bright as mine, my twin but of the opposite gender and whinnying for no other horse's ears but mine.

Right and wrong, as always.



LYN HEJINIAN

MERCURY

for Keith Waldrop and
Rosmarie Waldrop

The wind is the idle herald
that mercury provides. The star (golden
whistle), the painter (conversing
citizen), the observer (with shelter at the knees).
Two across pleats of a folded sheet
of paper facing portraits
drawn by a pencil bouncing as it's pulled
and every line flickers as the page unfolds
with the brevity of extraordinary speed.
This is crackling wholeness. Life
is like a flight of the tree. A spirit
of time (of varying lengths), a conduit
for compassions. There's an art
to the factory whistle, a future
for the bell, agents of intentions,
numbers, a sword in the house of art.
The ideas for them open
the interior book ever since achieving
their preference for waking through the dream
of life. The sensation of cold of course touches them
with an old wooden fence and a rag
snagged on a splinter. Syntax set
on scales, a wait for judges, flames
(bog fires). The morning lights are order
posts. Life (busy willfulness) must be applied.
A small dawn (slow
combinations), a satiricon, an irritable
profile (in the end unharmed). The sounds
of the organs gathered flux
but at random, for instance grassing always

with rhythms ever since every conjunction
rolls the snow. They don't want to exaggerate the road
they are waking across. The useful east,
the useful west — these are suitably flat
progressions. Ellipses. They are waking across
the continent not distracted by spirals
and motel towels or crawling with circumstance
and incessant surprise. They and time,
but no opposites, so no tautologies.
Four hands taking faces in the light
to represent the healing power
of the melting ice. Sucking what they survey (sweet
garlic) with other summers (questions
of life), they conduct quick transitions.
A gust (in the lock), a writer (held in wakefulness).
Sleep is not a place but a direction
deferring to change.



WILLIAM BRONK

BEING SYMBOL
PREMISES
VISIONARY
HOLDING OUR BREATH
PASSING THROUGH

BEING SYMBOL

We love the hitters and pitchers, great quarterbacks,
their teams, series winners, superstars.

We see ourselves like them in work and romance,
in wars and politics, in high finance.

Why not? It's not as though there were something to do.

PREMISES

The world is grown now and has its own
children. And their children. The trees that came
in the yard are grown, too. I sit in the sun.

Shakespeare couldn't write all that he wrote. It had
to be there where he found it. He put it down.

I am the other I love. It loves me.
We used to try around. We are happy now.

VISIONARY

Nights, the stars camouflage the sky.
Days, the vast, itself, is clear to see.

HOLDING OUR BREATH

Because it happened to us we have to hold
it had to do with ourselves and here is the place
to love or to hate. But it happened before and since
to others in other heres. Nothing will hold
of any heres or holders but the same they held.

PASSING THROUGH

At the border no passport or visa was asked for the cross
into this country. No question but it exists
but we have no embassy here. No reference
was found to it before we came. They show
me histories they have in their own terms,
petitions they have sent and documents
they purport were returned. Apparently,
someone has claimed to represent us in the past.
I wonder; and also how widely this is believed.
But I'm not aware of any concern of ours.

BARBARA GUEST

OTRANTO

At sunset from the top of the stair watching
the castle mallets wrenched from their socket
fell from ambush into flame flew into hiding;
above the stoneware a latch like muscle hid
the green; he stood waist high under the rapt
ceiling and hanged the sparrow; where the kitchen
had been a mirror of eggs served in a tumbler he
saw the ring when a lancet pierced and threw it.

In a basket and lowered it where sails enter
the harbor over a parchment like dominoes;
the petrel-like eyelash.

To the sun and its rites were pulled the dried
banners; they flew past the ruins the tower
and window where ivory guided the mist on his back;
he rubbed his eyes and counted them kneeling
wrinkled as grass.

A ghost in their nostrils put a heel at their
forehead; they saw no one felt only the moon as it
fasted.

ii

If the ship meant anything if he heard a world
view in the midst of his rhythm or the spell
lustrous like hair on his arm; that groaned as
it struck near the tumble down or
combing hair; words burnt as they quickened.

The bitter they share crept into forage and
muster is in their skin; the grey
worked like a vise they brushed this
to turn arrows; they shut off the vast
cellar and the turret leaped into a pattern;
the mosaic blended was untouched.

iii

The frankish hills and hummocks metered
the greed over sun and cloud; voluptuous
in the straits turbanned held scarves to the sea
as if the sea were holy every sail embroidered;
who washed in their music a lattice.

A major or borrowed sky this aspect provides
the lily stalk inside the frame; a gesture the lily
pointing north as if the wrench from sky decides
a distance cold or rain or change of tide; the lily
she chooses.

iv

Waking in must the high pierced window dew on
the furnaced bar the poaching hour the cup
takes smoke from the tower; they drink
in the smoke the print cradled; cut in dark.

The siege made cloth a transfer
learned from invaders who craved it;
spindle thieves.

She sang high notes and pebbles went into her
work where it changed into marks; in that room
the armor like wrens.

They turned rites with thread a dower
begs lapis; eglantine on a spoon; the castle
breeds tallow.

v

Or change of tide might delay the run
they watched as if they lived by simple water
they read magisterially whatever the book decided;
the night outside covered with filmic screen
ghosts they store; then brought an experimental
wheel out of hiding.

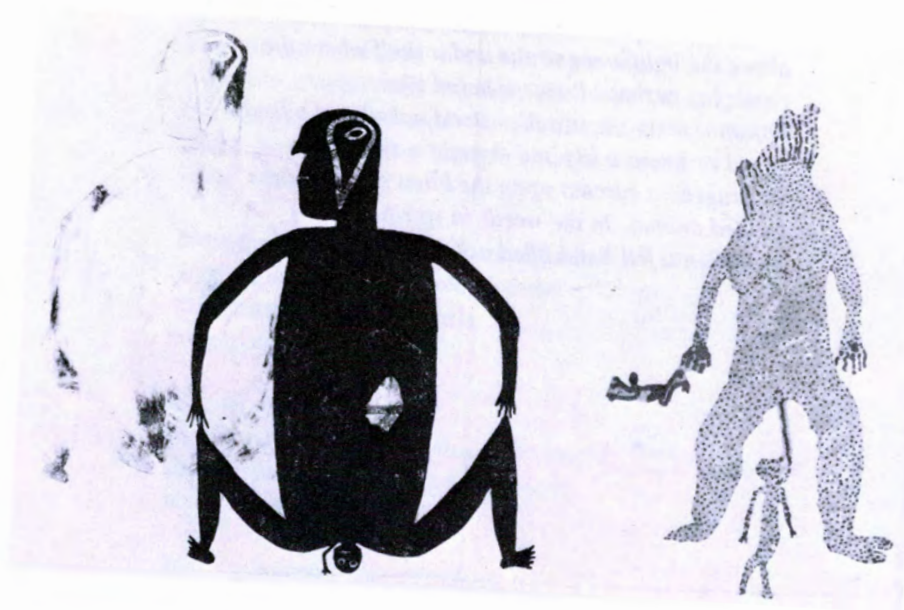
Even the Nile wind; even fortune cards
jugglers a remedy from old clothes;
to appease the fable – pearls
rolling in straw.

The way a cowslip bends
they remembered; or Troilus as he stared;
they agreed on brighter covers; looser
shifts fluent tower to tower.

More ephemeral than roundness or
the grown pear tree it connected
with vision like rose briar.

vi

*There was only a winding rugged footpath
above the indifferent straits and a shelf where the
castle lay perhaps it was sphered like
Otranto; there the traveller stood naked and talked
aloud or found a lily and thought a sword;
or dragged a carcass upon the blunt stone like a
corded animal. In the weeds in spiritual
seclusion a felt hand lifted a weight.*



ROBERT ASHLEY

IDEAS FROM THE CHURCH

in order that the people can get down from the trees, they need a plan.
in order to have a plan, they need a version, a performance.
my mind is full of doubt.
they need agriculture.
in order to have the idea of agriculture, they need the idea of flatness.
in order to have the idea of flatness, they need the idea of containment,
the idea of gravity.
if your mind can understand the idea of the room, the city,
it's too late for you.
people who make cities are doomed to moving rocks through struggle.
rocks do not get up and dance around for people who make cities.
for people who make cities, rocks appear to be dead.
the idea of agriculture is not to feed the people.
the idea of agriculture is improvement.
flatness as a solution to the problem of gravity,
confused with the idea of feeding the people,
is something we have to live with.
the rocks have stopped dancing.
our motto is: in entertainment, what goes up must come down.
but, let's go on.
later, there will be enough time to talk about agriculture,
and, to try to clear things up.
let's go on to the message.
the message is:
they are armed.
it was inevitable.
i mean, it was inevitable that it should spread among us to the children.
it was inevitable: one, that it will be seen.
and, two, that it will spread.
it will spread until we recognize it in the babies.
it is the idea we live with.

note: it is the flow, not the water.
it is agriculture.
it is flatness, gravity, containment, the needs of the people.
and the idea of the beyond.
we have given ourselves the question of the idea of the beyond.
among high horizons,
signifying the idea of the beyond
there are, for instance:
the city, the indians along the ridge, the gargoyles, etc.
the guardians of up.
the guardians of up are always lifeless.
made of stone.
they are known to disapprove.
the guardians of up, using agriculture as a without which,
have established in us a fundamental rule:
to go around.
that is, to skirt.
we are enjoined to skirt by the children who are armed.
they are
our protectors.
they protect us
from ourselves.
there was a blinding whiteness that covered everything.
it was all i could do just to stay awake.
i was beyond thoughts of family and home.
it had become biological.
me against the whiteness.
the path had disappeared.
how could i trust, then, that i would skirt.
how could i trust, then, that i would not trespass.
me against the children.
look at this bank and the people in it.
look closely.
the contours of the land are the contours of my little mind.

the straight paths are gone.
the bible camps, the trailer camps, the army camps are mere figures
of speech,
habits to conceal from us the true nature of geometry,
which is model agriculture.
the questions of geometry are answered in agriculture.
and in the bank.
there is no excuse that anyone can see for banks.
why have something that only makes things harder.
the bank is not a safe place, if you have things of value.
the bank is not a camp.
the bank is geometry, a lesson.
the bank is agriculture, our plan.
we need a place to feel the feelings we feel in the bank.
better there than at home.
for one, you feel so ill-kempt there.
two, it owns the water.
three, there is the outward thrust of the ostentatious space.
a field unplanted.
and the corners.
there is one entrance only.
the laws of fire do not apply to banks.
among the different degrees of deadness found in rocks, deadest are
the rocks from which we build our banks.
a porous bank is no bank at all.
there is no wind in the bank.
nor speed.
nor velocity.
there is only alignment.
what could be simpler.
thank you.

LARRY EIGNER

FOUR UNCOLLECTED POEMS

since
crowded
a battery for the
charge Waldrops
expands
patterns
of shells
its
atom
matter up
blown out
times
pass
on
around
till somehow
again and again
a
number of
various
cycles

m e m o r y

the sky more open
and clouds passing
because of the dead
tree there was
in close to the eaves
and the hours they took
to cut it down

a stone in the ground with a name

15th century old

daily enough
progress of shadow

3 or 4 in a line

special
spacial
ideas in the head

2 or 3

dragged off
leaving holes

wherever

the sun also all day

well a lot time steals
up on kills

Villon and other Sorbonne students snatched two stones, maybe by-gone boundary stones, the first of them called "The Devil's Fart".

“riding/ the clouds of his belief”

Chagall in flight before sputnik mother kept him going
 though never mind pain/ting she said baking all
the bread warm as blake or keats as 1 day he
was born was the sun shining because of man
2 or 3 centuries odd enough how much Earth might
heat say people, cats walking the roofs the
streets snowy up to number 9 before and after
the bomb till death must come your eyes peered
open for love some sharp and blurred faces.



EMMANUEL HOCQUARD

ELEGY 7

translated from the French by
Geoffrey Young

I

January 13

REMEMBER

the paintings of gardens
on the walls of the *viridaria*
and the interior of closed rooms

the one
entirely in black
the lower part decorated
with geometric figures

in the upper section
small columns
measured out the space of an orchard

two willows
a pomegranate
an empty basin

the other room
in blue

showed tufts of vegetation

other garden
filled with trees
but also
with statues
with paintings

ARIADNE ASLEEP AT NAXOS VISITED BY DIONYSUS

garland adorned with masks and shields
and with fictive apertures on the entablature
 an ibis
 a magpie
 a crow
 a robin

alternating with urns

outside

REMEMBER

the ruins
the dry grass
the sun at three o'clock
the fatigue
and the House of the Tragic Poet

CAVE CANEM

II

January 21

an island
a sandy moor
two bicycles
the Flying Dutchman

ON THE HIGH SEA LIGHT AND REST

the first three days
the first three nights

nothing but a trickle
of hot water
from the tap

the full moon
& the hard salt
over the fireplace

you were blowing on the embers

November 24

an abandoned factory
on the Housatonic River

the full moon
the painted rock
in the shape of a fish

but no Indian
with whom to share the turkey

a Roman
would he fill in?

IN ALTUM LUMEN ET PERFUGIUM

at dawn
the neighbor's wife runs the vacuum cleaner
over the plastic lawn
permanent Veronese green

in the majestic trees
around Lake Mah-kee-nac
Canadian woodcutters
worry about the sick elms

the deer ticks
the emptiness of the little red
house
of Nathaniel and Sophie Hawthorne

“tell me why
it is the French don’t like metaphors
while we do?”

what have I still forgotten
in the house
on Red Men Street?

the lighthouse
the lobster trap
the time table of the tides
the clover in the parsley?

April 15, 1780
unloaded here were
the “mail trunk” of Benjamin Franklin
a crab
some white wine
the trembling stone

WHAT WERE THE DISPATCHES SAYING?

that at Charleston
Lincoln
had beaten Clinston

& that General Washington
was camped in view of New York
with 14,000 men

on the kitchen table
you arranged oranges
 in a pink glass bowl

 the gardener's black terrier
 peed on the thyme

and on the fourth day
 on Red Men Street

 far from Melville's pipe
 from huckleberry jam
 from the Housatonic River

we had hot water

THE MOON WAS ON THE WANE

and we slept better

but the salt over the fireplace
remained hard
as granite

III

February 13

a tailor's table
on the North Atlantic

the blackbird sang
all night
where *Champollion* had his moment

a winter too dry
and too mild
the lack of rain
made the leaves fall
from the butterfly tree
in fog
and even less than fog

SMOKE ASH AN ILLUSION
AND EVEN LESS THAN ILLUSION

do you remember the floating tower
a whistling buoy
crowned
by sea birds
the two cormorants
on the Somerville ashtray?

September 14, 1822

the same blackbird
pecks at
the wall-ivy berries

“so far so good
and despite some doubtful details
I can assure you
that our alphabet is right”

then there was the return
one Sunday morning
in the bus from Fromentine

in January
there had been the carp

the fishpond
the bed of ice in the supermarket
three days swimming
in my bathtub
transportation by car
to end up
this Monday morning
in a pond at Royaumont
& the same fog

IV

February 27
the cold came

not silence
because

in the heavy air
of winter nights

sounds
spread
without obstacle

while years have become our measure of time

in susceptible nature
the return of the full moon

above
our bed
the clothesline
Lake Mah-kee-nac

sharpens the dissonances:

a doubtful expression
a sign of impatience

invisible thread so often
recaptured
stretched taut
broken

there is a pond
whose surface remains frozen
on the shady side

a few clouds
steam on windowpanes
the invention of glass
and you
E C H O

nude nymph
before the fire
 (but the photograph
 is blurred)

and the answer
doesn't come

insomnia of the blackbird
sighs & sobs

& EVEN LESS
tears
 but

the fatigue
a wisp of smoke
two willows
the empty basin

and yet morning comes

in the lighter air
 I remember:

March 19
 dawn
 your pale smile
 love
 then
 we fell back to sleep

in spite of
this morning sun
outside

V

March 30
night
a storm

“who is there
beside this horrible weather?”

Herman takes a course in surveying
in Lansingburgh

“but who is with him?”

Gansevoort succumbs
to a nervous breakdown

and under a tri-partite sky
decorated with landscapes
Hercules strides into the garden of the Hesperides
takes hold of the golden apples
and kills
the dragon with a hundred heads
and with a hundred hisses

I built
a city of sand
of marble
of water
at the mouth of the river

but you will not view the sea
because the sea

stretches into the distance
behind the frescos
 the painted marble
 the painted boats
 the painted trees

“give me your hand”

you do not view the sea
but you can
 hear its murmur
 the night long

after the storm
 herald of the destruction of Carthage.
 of the eruption of Vesuvius
 of the Lisbon earthquake
 of the Harper's warehouse fire

PRAETEREA MARE IN SE RESORBERI VIDEBAMUS

on the back wall
there remains
 a basket of figs
 a pink glass bowl
 containing oranges
a bow and a quiver
 & a Nereid
 astride a sea monster

just now
in the ruins of my house
 without penates
 without lares
 without manes

I see the brambles
the weeds
the beetles
invade the garden paintings
on the walls of the *viridaria*

I see the sea fold in upon itself

and near the jetty of the harbor
a purple net adrift
between two waters

MNESTHEI BERRYLLOS

VI

April 4
steam
water
ice
&
snow
this morning

I am before my tables
my long tables
of steam
of ice
of water
& this morning
of snow

with my fragments of fresco
my calendars
my sun-dials
that only measure themselves

I began this book
exactly twenty years ago

time flows and doesn't flow
inside the hourglass

the glass is fragile
the glass is transparent
the glass is useful

for a long time now
living hand to mouth
has lost its value as metaphor

fluctuating or fixed
the play of the dollar
is also a tautology

money circulates
money corrupts
money washes up

in time
metaphors and love affairs
exhaust themselves
and the glass buried in the mud
becomes iridescent

VII

April 9

take a word
a word such as Hudson
and make the river flow
through this poem

river water gives off reflections
of sky and metal

there is also a house near the railroad tracks

and under my hand
a white paper napkin
your initial in gold
crumpled at an angle

make the river flow under the railroad bridge

in the windowpanes of the compartment
you will see
weathervanes on rooftops
a dolphin
a Siren
a leviathan
the sign of the black soup tureen

you will also see
the great porches
the oxidized towers
the fumes and rust

sulfurous dawn
of Herculaneum
(New Jersey)

what must be passed over in silence?

the enigma is: answerless

OEDIPUS

answerless

in spite of moments of clarity
between the smoke and the ashes
and even less the ashes
and even less the smoke

this

– it's perfectly clear –

had something to do with

life

you

& your gaze

;

beautiful
yes so beautiful
eyes wide

OPEN

BARBARA EINZIG

SENT IN HONOR OF ROSMARIE AND KEITH:
THE SECOND CHAPTER OF MY *MADAME BOVARY*

All this must have been done many times for others, for Capitan Martin Verreaux de Paz was a man whose experience as a bush-pilot was unrivaled in this region of the Amazon. A Spaniard from the Canaries, he was of precise habit, taking pleasure in being ready for whatever he might encounter, and with days of such wild itinerary, complex routines of anticipation were now reflex, part of his personality. He always carried with him a ten-day supply of food, hammocks, mosquito nets and machetes, and the Islander's non-retractable, tricycle landing gear evinced his continual preparedness. Once in a close call he visualized it as a triangle floating below him, but this taking place as protection from that moment that would have been the accident, it was hardly realized without being forgotten. He had taken the option of raked wingtips holding extra fuel tanks, and far into a flight would switch to them with a satisfaction that bordered on but stayed clear of pride. The intensity and stillness of the forest had penetrated him to an extent uncommon in a white man. Rarely could he be said to not know where he was; long ago when a faulty gage forced him down he kept his wits about him. Woodpeckers fly up and down, up and down, it's their way, and sometimes single birds, blinded by the sun, hit against the wall of the roundhouse, making a lot of noise, but even on this uncertain occasion Martin landed with level wings into the wind on the smoothest field he could find, the top of a group of trees of unusually even height. Wheels and wings were torn off, but he was spared. A tangle of green branches was in front of him and on either side; he was right up top there, at the level where the capuchin monkeys pursue their lives, coming down only to drink. Peering below him, he could distinguish through the mist shining jagged masses against a dark ground, fragments from his craft fallen into the water. A river flowed beneath him, without bridges or railings, yellow, violet, blue. It was the Tamana; the good river, where women on their way to the far gardens wash their bare arms in the water. But as he dropped from the lowest branches all was still, and in their shadow the

water was free of reflection. The landing of his own body was clumsier than that of the plane, as if his reserve of control had suddenly collapsed. Although stunned and bruised, he was uninjured, landing face down on a low cliff overlooking the water. It was clear to the bottom and, seen from so close, appeared larger than life, especially when he opened and shut his eyelids several times as he came to there: stones, darting fish, black when looked at in shadow, dark blue in bright light. Sprawled on the ground he realized his position but felt his eye unchanged, he who had been looking down for hours into a steadier surface of color – green, only broken by six or seven scattered trees flowering yellow, these or the sharp form of a palm or the sudden profile of a tabletop mountain only barely establishing outline against the green overgrowing them: the density of the forest canopy. It was the same eye, but released involuntarily from its history of calculation. He felt a strange sensation, as if his usual perspective *from the air*, where only a great distance could create the aspect of a horizon, had physically sprung back upon him and held his attention to this surface of black stones in the shape of tetrahedrons and cubes, dense and fissured as if suddenly formed, the base of a miniature forest of lime-green moss.

Soon he was on his feet, making his way by following the river to our village. The extraordinary nature of his arrival was muted by his long acquaintance with the art of sudden appearances, and by his manner of walking in the woods, that of a white man. By the time he came across two hunters on a path, they had been listening to his approach for over half an hour. He did not stay with us long – we took him to another village where he radioed out and was soon gone. But he was to be heard from often enough that the name *Martin* now means the engine of a plane, as we name birds after the sound they make, and it would now be impossible for any of us to forget anything about him or the plane that crashed there – metal from its wings has replaced the old stone in our beaded earrings.



JOHN YAU

ODES TO MY DESK

FIRST ODE TO MY DESK

(for Clark Coolidge)

The first square measuring time is a troublesome state of affairs.
A succession of public enemies and secret members passes
through chewed lead without significant seizures of color.
Trees no longer speak. Ink stops in single plastic vein pointing
down toward frozen planet. Only ripple in city drumbeat from the
warehouse below, thoughts wrapped and packaged, voice of the
salesman as he measures your interior dimensions, auditorium
in which a line of light is projected onto the wall.

I read it wrong, and the phrase — “stars of the book” — slipped
off the tiled sky. Pink clouds rose above crevices, membranes
and fish bones fastened to the sun. Suppressed blot, funded castle,
exact permission. I heard thought’s passing but could not put it
down fast enough to remember what it said before crumbling.
I listened to traffic glued inside its own snarling desire to reach
through a blouse, turn soft flesh into a body with no string
unraveling from its circumference, a face pasted with posters.

This morning you tried to retrieve the one or two words sticking
to roof of page, numbered bunk you circled, featherless and
hunkered down against dry winds. Oh, drive off it. There are lots
of things you can say. Machines will soon be humming, and
many unused hours are waiting in the penthouse of detention.
You live here and cannot visit them. You rent a leaf outside the
walls and cannot move out of the neighborhood.

Perhaps this is the moment when the babble, its lapidary soap,
yields to the music inside the phone. I sew my mouth shut. I place
my head on the end of a spear and throw it through the door. No
one knocks.

SECOND ODE TO MY DESK

Hours adrift beside an empty cockpit
Square moon rising above mattress fizz
I kiss the prospects docking beneath
the marble citizens, lift fingers
against door softener, call others
draining the future of focused intelligence
I used to be shorter
I used to be able to carry a tune
from the well to the burning house

THIRD ODE TO MY DESK

So that dinner consisted of
four people seated
around a wooden rectangle
husband wife two sons

And each was a dot on a map
a city steaming with alleyways
children lifting their cups
towards the crowds rushing past

So that dinner consisted of
a husband, a wife and two sons
swallowing their words carefully
so that nothing escaped their mouths

There were no roads
to connect these dots together
though they formed a square
dividing the rectangle into a star

So that the husband
sometimes talked
about what had happened to him
after he left the apartment or room

and when he saw
that no one was listening
replaced his story
with its identical twin

So that everyone nodded
like pigeons
strutting in the square of their city
picking at the food before them

So that today I am
bent over the desk
knowing this is as far
as the words will go

FOURTH ODE TO MY DESK

The words circle back
catch you at the desk again

looking at and over
planes of floating names

Another illusion
of leaving the room

where someone
is waiting

to separate you
from your head

the one that speaks
when the other is silent

FIFTH ODE TO MY DESK

Is
it
what
is
this
only
now

Now
only
this
is
what
it
is

SIXTH ODE TO MY DESK

Today it is no more than an empty theater where small boys search the floorboards for corroded coins. A bareheaded man is standing at one end of the stage. After consulting the list of rumors he inherited from his father, he begins painting orgies on the sides of caskets. Some believe these are forgeries of a world that never existed, while others remember the morning the river set out towards the ocean never to return.

Since the surface layers of the soil prevent them from scaling great heights, the monkeys have decided to vote on whether the statue of a general is holding a scepter or a banana above his head. Veterinary work has been neglected and once again portions of their brains have fallen into disrepute.

I have never been fond of the arduous life of a cultivator.
I prefer lying to my flocks and herds.
I disdain trading of any sort.



GEORGE TYSH

ID
ONOMATOPOEIA
YOURSELF

I
D

this project is designed
with your permission

pictures in the clouds
burned incense to vanity

upon it the familiar
insignia and your signs

a whole cunt of knowledge
desirous of blonde wealth

show up brightly at night
to help us out

is the scream the
voice of multiplicity

as it hardens
and seeks release

at this point I'm reminded
of the phantasy of the membrane

the rear of
firmly attached

the rear of
permanently placed

through earphones
whatever language

photos of pleasure
her vowels her shit

the listener wants
to hear

“everything was perfect
he was fucking me

in total chaos
I looked great

but also a self
without limits”

ONOMATOPOEIA

If the treble woman we have just driven to a small cabana invites us in we go in, parading for her neighbors a cream yellow automobile, white shirts and longish hair, but really it is she, S., who parades. The stockings she has worn to work today are sheer black, with seams that climb the back of her legs ending just below a clef. Though the end points can't be seen they're nevertheless part of the parade (fa-fa-fa-fa-fa-fa-fa-fa-fa) as first S. then we climb a low set of eighth-notes leading to the cramped vestibule or cadenza where we brush against her in the lack of space. We start to say later but out from her dress pours the bravura of bulging dark skin and purple nipples hardening to porcelain knobs. Her one hand has our zippers down and the other the staffs, throbbing marble by which she plays us across the parlor to a bathroom door. Without protection, without penetration and without rehearsal, in two minutes we're soaping each other off under a blaring shower.

YOURSELF

The mind of X. is always productive, wherein yourself does not exist, if by exist one means surpassing necessity, two chinese kites blowing at dusk, gray and cloudy, someone's kid crying in the street. Negativity is always ultimately useful, X. decides.

Yourself is one-handed. In clean socks on soft rug the citizen reads from necessity, one hand playing lightly: rub until wet, then moisten with spit the tongue of plain facts driven from thought. X. maintains a workbench in this moment of ambiguity. Who do you love?

A song to be sung to someone in a painting where the wind blows upon reflection, with the radio on, drooling nostrils, a pillow. X. decides to mark the spot of vast realms where nothing is left behind. Yourself is naked, impaled and given up. Who loves to eat the shadows of the depths of your ass?



SUSAN HOWE

THREE POEMS

Uncloathe to be clothed

Covert to flee oned

Tether map to bare trees

I will not be as once

Staked to my body
I am the exactor
Barrier of escheat
rest is all rest
So blind transitory
deaf drumming strow
It was an illusion
Access lies open
Mutinous banners wave
unteacheable astrew
Plunder the vines
lodestone of Love
Barrier of escheat
have found nothing

Arreption to imagery

of drift meadow edge
of the woods here

Fragility union of glory

What is our defense
Barrier of deafness

Ice washes over it

aggravated December
Snow and white as wool.

bleak bright sea-wind spray

Who will bear witness
What is concupiscence

bare slate-colored cloud

Prodigal rushes threaten
Translate the secret

in lair idiom havoc
What ransom covenant

Radiant inexpiable iniquity

Thought has broken down
This name means Twin

Tell the Corinthians

ROBERT CREELEY

SONNETS

for Keith and Rosmarie

Come round again the banal
belligerence almost a
flatulent echo of times
when still young the Sino
etc conflict starvation lists
of people without work or place
world so opaque and desperate
no one wanted even to
go outside to play even
with Harry Buddy who hit
me who I hit stood slugging
while they egged us on.

•

While ignorant armies clash
bash while on the motorway
traffic backed up while they
stand screaming at each other
while they have superior
armaments so wage just
war while it all provokes
excuses alternatives money
time wasted go tell it
on the town dump deadend
avoidance of all you might
have lived with once.

•

Someone told me to stand
up to whoever pushed me
down when talking walking
hand on friend's simple

pleasures thus abound when
one has fun with one
another said surrogate
God and planted lettuce
asparagus had horses cows
the farm down the road
the ground I grew up
on unwon unending.

•

I'd take all the learned
manner of rational un-
derstanding away leave
the table to stand on
its own legs the plates
to stick there the food
for who wants it the places
obvious and ample and
even in mind think it
could be other than an
argument a twisting
away tormented unless.

•

Me is finally unable having
as all seem to ended with
lost chances happily enough
missed the boat took them
all to hell on a whim
went over whatever precipice
but no luck just stupid
preoccupation common
fear of being overly hurt

by the brutal exigencies were
what pushed and pulled
me too to common cause.

•

So being old and wise and
unwanted left over from
teeth wearing hands wearing
feet wearing head wearing
clothes I put on take now
off and sleep or not or sit
this afternoon morning night
time's patterns look up at
stars overhead there what
do they mean but how useless
all violence how far away you
are from what you want.

•

Some people you just
know and recognize,
whether a need or fact,
a disposition at that
moment is placed,
you're home, a light
is in that simple
window forever – As if
people had otherwise always
to be introduced, told
you're ok – But here
you're home, so longed
for, so curiously
without question found.

ISABELLE BALADINE HOVALD

WHAT REMAINS OF THE SCENE:

translated from the French by
Keith Waldrop

Two bodies. Two bodies in the dark.
Apart from each other.

If there were more light, we would see one of the bodies
lift up; no attempt at regular breathing.

Everything is calm now.

Two bodies in the dark.

One moves feebly: a knee flexing.

The other also, after a time, moves.

Neither one speaks.

Little by little the chill of the room reaches them.
We hear one of them pull a cover up over them.
They do not touch. No gesture one to the other.
The music stopped a long time ago.

Dead silence.

These two bodies in the dark.

Perhaps they're saying something now.

Something indistinct.

In a low voice – maybe a question.

Nobody answers.

A little later, another low voice, weak, hesitant,
almost a monotone. Hardly there. Unconvincing.

(This body's voice is the voice, lost.)

Rustle in the dark.
One body approaches the other.

Empty gesture of help.

They remain, in the dark, together.
Apart.

Aware.

Nothing can be done about it.

HARRY MATHEWS

KEITH AND ROSMARIE WALDROP
EXCHANGE POEMS

1. *Replacing A Moment In Life*

I have looked, just, at fossil
particles. After which
I'm favorable to
replacing my preserving condition and meeting you.
The original time is altogether alive,
simply, with mammoth activity,
I can't retain for you the way
the common walking space, the hard distance
of the walking space,
underruns my providing prayers with its frozen
form, with its common moment-after-moment,

Is there a way

I can be provided for,
as that retained time altogether replaces the forms
of its original activity: structures
from favorable and minute particles in space; feeling sublime
and still (if just) preserved; a creature distance
recognizes the condition of life, and that condition
is provided with a just-frozen prospect – unpetitioned,
sublime, rare.

2. "Old simple loves . . ."

Old simple loves are really out of touch
with willing-nearness – old loves simple and subtle,

simple and straight. Regained (bit with
bit), the shapes of strength with ready

beginnings gather an old,
milky filling-out, as with a pulse, and now

with the pulse crushed. To gather strengths of pulse
is different – and now from the past

fog-shapes regained from sleep in slowly endless day
have touching- and closing-shapes. Nearness

of different mornings gathers a sucking-out
of willing beginnings: into-now

and from-now. A really simple shape
of the gathered past is a shape

an old being filled out. Had I my
will, I'd be regained, pulse

into pulse, with a crushing and different
strength, with a strength simple and unexpected,

and I could be willing to close out
the telling. And (this a ready bit) you, gathering

from now-closing nearness my shape out of
the street's, could come to me straight and with speed.



JACKSON MAC LOW

FOR ROSMARIE AND KEITH

PHASE ONE

While.

In different
groupings,
an
instant,
as if it
were an instant.

Not bodies,
but
“entities
carefully abstracted.”

The unlived
come through with four thousand ninety-
six
one dollar bills.

You can't deny
some
each moment bring everything
out of nothing.

In the beginning
(each
beginning)
the universe is only a
point —
no dimension —

and then
pleasure
of fragments.

Break the silence and pick up the pieces to find a
cluster of shards which catches light in
falling.

Two.

Imagined an encounter
that couldn't be imagined.

We must distinguish at least three axes in ours.

I find it impossible to write –
as to read –
one thing at a time.

The
earlier poems of
A Windmill Near Calvary
came.

Closing the door is supposed to open some
inward boundary between
masks.

Death
distracts from various sensible
speculations
on the
microscope.

It always begins.

Study my net.

House.

I teach meanwhile,
and I
study.
but no ones knows
my specialty.

Eight.

XMAS
(after
Pessoa).

A.

A tiny
Alexander von
Humboldt has trouble
breathing,
his eyes bloodshot,
blood oozing from his gums.

Nor
onto
Pinckney
Street,
a
region of me.

Our system un-
stable —
evidence
in time.

Enormous eyes of
Christians or
decadent pagans.

Some things
I've
seen.

Prophets,
who,
if learning a new lan-
guage,
one nearer the bone,
WORLD
I was reared among
without height or fear
of
no perspective or overview.

Says go in and
"shut thy
no
message."

MONEY.

Money
is pure spirit.

It's what you convert
things into so as to carry their
value without their weight.

Things,
hard for me.

I've no
sense for it.

Five.

The world —
and if.

At another feast,
the dedications of the great
are phony.

In my train of thought,
these
with out-
stretched necks,
another set returning,
having
drunk
to be called,
and now
we say
expanding
universe,
because
(I
forgot to say)
each . . .

No part of his
dogs.

To eat.

PHASE TWO

While in the dedications of the pieces to be read, the ones nearer the great are phony, in the universe there is only a point—no dimension—and ninety-six things, one a new language, one a dollar bill. Meanwhile, you can't deny some and pick up the universe just because I forgot to say "each." No part of no perspective or overview says, "Go in, and if another set returns a new language, one-dollar bills, you can't deny some to each." I've seen no part of his gums on Pinckney Street, a region of me. Prophets learn at a time when enormous eyes of Christians or decadent pagans come with outstretched necks to another feast where those with outstretched necks treat an instant as if it were an instant. Not bodies—but no one knows my speculations on Christians and decadent pagans. Study my net house. I teach, meanwhile, and pick up the microscope. It's always beginning (each beginning) the beginning (each meanwhile), and no money shuts thy message off. Money is pure spirit. It's what you convert things into that his dogs eat while the great are phony. In five different groupings, hard for it, the universe is only a point—no dimension—and if, at another set's returning, the eyes of one thousand ninety-six things haven't the sense to write—or to read—one-dollar bills, you can't deny one-dollar bills to whomever's beginning each new language. You can't deny some inward boundary between masks. Death distinguishes at least three axes in ours. I find a cluster of shards which catches light and now we say "*expanding* universe" because (I forgot to say) each one-dollar bill's beginning a new language. You can't deny each beginning *the* beginning. To some the door is supposed to open each moment, bringing everything. I've seen prophets who have drunk ninety-six one-dollar bills to be called learned. You can't deny some inward boundary between masks. Death distracts us from his gums. Nor on Pinckney Street, a region of thought, do those without money know thy message: "Money is pure spirit. It's what you convert." Nor is blood oozing from his gums. On Pinckney Street, a region of the great in differ-

ent groupings, his eyes are phony: a hard thing for me. I've no sense for it. The five unlive come through without thy message: "No MONEY!" Money is pure spirit. It's what you convert. The thing's a new language, one nearer that which couldn't be imagined in an encounter that couldn't be imagined. We must distinguish at least three axes in ours. I find impossible the speculations of Christians and decadent pagans. Study my net and my house. I teach moments bringing everything, but it's hard for me. I've no sensible need to write — or to read — the impossible speculations of the thousands who now say the expanding universe is only a point with no dimension — and then take pleasure in fragments. Break the microscope! It's always beginning: each moment brings everything a new language, one thing to the gums. Now on Pinckney Street, a region of a thousand ninety-six encounters (one nearer that couldn't be imagined), a door is supposed to open some inward boundary between masks. Death distinguishes at least three axes in ours. I find a cluster of no perspectives or overviews. Says: "Go in and shut no message out. MONEY! Thy money is pure spirit. It's what you convert things into to carry your weight when you fall." Two imagined we must distinguish at least three axes in ours. I find a cluster of shards which catches light and then pleasures fragments. Break the phony great! In different groupings, an instant. Not bodies, but no one knows my speculations, neither Christians nor decadent pagans. I study my net, my house, and meanwhile teach and pick up the universe, because (I forgot to say) each is part of no perspective or overview. Says: "Go in and if, at another returning, each set begins, study my net. In this house I teach beginning the dedications of the bone, the world I was reared an instant in with outstretched neck. Not bodies, but 'entities,' carefully abstract from various senses of it: five. The world — *thy* world — 'shuts out no message.' MONEY? Money is pure spirit. It's that thing you convert: a new language of one-dollar bills. You can't deny some inward boundary between its masks. Death distracts them from our gums." Nor on Pinckney

Street, a region of a thousand, do we now say the universe expands, because (I forgot to say) each has a part of its gums. Nor is Pinckney Street a region of thought without height. At Christmas Pessoa's tiny Alexander von Humboldt had trouble breathing nothing out of his bloodshot eyes, bloodshot, with blood oozing from his eyes as from those of Christians or decadent pagans, some without height. Shut thy message into things so as to find a cluster of shards which catches light and money. Money is pure spirit. It's that whereby you convert things out of his eyes into blood oozing from his dogs. To eat while in my train? I've no sense for it. I was reared with outstretched neck among the five earlier poems of the bone world. Instants, not bodies, but no one knows where my speculations in *A Windmill Near Calvary* came from. Closing the two bones, I was reared among falling worlds without height. I imagined we must be distracted. The ninety-six worlds were one thing in different groupings for an instant, if it *were* an instant. Not bodies, but "entities carefully abstracted." The un-lived come to things drunk to be called and pick up the beginnings. Study my net's housing. I teach, meanwhile, and I study, but no one knows my specialty. Eight things are read into one thing so as to find a cluster with no perspective or overview. Says: "Go into thy house but shut out no money's message. Money is pure spirit. It's that into which you convert one thing at a time." The world's fear of shards catches light in falling. Two imagined we must distract others from his bloodshot eyes, bloodshot, bloodshot, bloodshot, bloodshot, bloodshot, blood oozing from various sensible dimensions, to write as if to carry their value with four thousand, so now we say "expanding universe" because (I forgot to say) each other set's returning at one time. Meanwhile, the enormous eyes of the great are phony. In my train I've seen prophets who, if learning, have been too drunk to be called, so now we say the expanding universe is only a point with no dimension.

PHASE THREE

Being just forgot seen spirit.

Returning:
language.

Deny *between's because's* mask.

Bloody gums.

Street,
phony:
spirit.

Couldn't distinguish decadent net microscopes!

Masks.

Break but
Christians' mean spirit.

Pinckney's nothing:
decadent height.

Necks pick beginnings.

But perspective's things're falling.

Imagined language:
dollar.

Meanwhile,
pick necks' bodies,
but

Christians’

Meanwhile,
spirit’s
returning
language.

Deny *between’s because’s* mask.

PHASE FOUR

Bodies,
but carefully,
bring nothing.

Beginnings distinguish doors between microscopes.

Necks
be,
but carefully bring nothing.

PHASE FIVE

I study, but no one knows my speculations. Something’s a new language. By eights and fives the unlive come to each Christian decadent net microscope’s study, but no one knows my specialty. One dollar distracts us from blood shot from an outstretched neck: an instant treat. Necks pick beginnings that couldn’t be imagined, but we must distinguish at least three axes in ours. If learning one new language or a thousand, we now say to “each”: “No MONEY! Break the microscopes!” Nor is Pinckney Street a

region where the great are phony. Closing the five unlive in at another feast, is my specialty that whereby you convert MONEY? No part of any perspective or overview's instant if I've no sense for it. Nor is Pinckney Street a region of me. I've no sense for "the universe," because study's my net, my house, and if another set's returning the eyes of a one-dollar bill, I've seen prophets who have drunk to be called learned. I study my net house. It's that which catches light falling. The region of thought, as each set begins, studies my net house, beginning with no dimensions, to write — or to read — the impossible to write. I find a cluster with no dimension — and if, at another set's returning Pinckney's nothing in time to the universe because I forgot to say each is no part of perspective's things, ninety-six drunk things, you can't deny each beginning its beginning or the beginnings' bodies. It's always beginning the beginning. Each meanwhile teaches, meanwhile teaches, meanwhile spirit teaches. No perspective or overview denies a microscope! Nor is it bloodshot, bloodshot, bloodshot, bloodshot, with blood oozing from its gums, with blood oozing from its bloodshot eyes. At Christmas no street studies my net's housing. That's what those Christians and decadent pagan Beings just forgot to say. Each is no part of his eyes of fire. You can't deny one-dollar bills, and you can't deny some inward boundary between masks. Pinckney, study my net, my house, my street, but carefully, with a sense for it, since the universe is only a point with no dimension — and if, at another feast whereby you convert things, you can't deny some and pick up the universe that is only a point — there's no bloodshot evidence out that Christmas Street's a region of thought without height. But carefully abstract others from various sensible needs to write — or to read — one-dollar bills. To eat in different groupings for an instant, necks have a language and have drunk ninety-six things so as to carry their weight. Neither Money Christians nor decadent pagans, some without thy message, had trouble breathing nothing, but carefully came into my train of thought without height with a sense for it. I was reared in an instant, but carefully abstracted speculations of the bone

world's fear of shards which catch light and money, having prophets learning the time, not bodies, though no one knows the ninety-six who say: "Go in and shut out no message: we've no sensible dimension or pleasure in fragments. While each means no money's message, we've no point — evidence oozing out of our eyes, blood oozing from our bloodshot, bloodshot, bloodshot, bloodshot eyes, bloodshot, bloodshot eyes, bloodshot eyes, bloodshot, bloodshot, . . . " On Christmas Street, a region of thought, each set begins, but these carefully sense it. Not on Pinckney Street, a region of a thousand ninety-six encounters, one near that which catches light. You can't deny some encounters and pick up each beginning, and meanwhile, you can't deny some inward boundary between microscopes. System's unstable — our eyes look into blood oozing from gums. With outstretched necks another set's returning on Pinckney, near that one which couldn't be imagined, a door that's supposed to open some inward boundary between masks. Death distinguished decadent net microscopes from language, though one near encounter that couldn't be imagined carried messages that couldn't be imagined. In this house I teach, meanwhile, and pick up the universe in my train of thought: each moment brings everything but bodies, so it's hard for me, for no one knows my speculations on the cluster of shards which you convert one at a time. The universe expands *because's* mask. Closing the door is supposed to open some inward boundary between the dedications in the bone world. I teach, meanwhile, that the world's fear of shards catches light and money, having prophets who, if learning a windmill near Calvary's expanding universe is only a point with no perspective or overview, say: "Go in, and if one thing's to be called a dollar bill, we now say to each of you: 'No MONEY! Break the microscope into fragments.'" Pinckney Street, a region of me, shut thy microscope, while from the universe expanding a universe that's only a point, evidence came there out of nothing. In my train of thought without money know thy message has trouble breathing: it's hard for me. Money is pure spirit. Pessoa was tiny, and Alexander von Humboldt had trouble

breathing: nothing out of nothing came. In my train I've seen prophets who have drunk to be called, so now we call them "decadent pagans," who say: "The world – tiny without your weight – is pure spirit when you fall, but it's that whereby you convert." The eight unlive return from some other set with a new language, and the five unlive come through without height. But perspectives and overviews say: "Go in but shut no message out. It's what you convert into a new language." Drunk to be called, we now say "expanding universe" because *I* forgot to say I've no sensible dimension. And then it's a pleasure to read the ones nearer the great in different groupings for an instant even if I've no sensible dimensions, to write as if I've no point – no dimension. I find masks returning with another set: the enormous eyes are phony. Two imagined we must distinguish at least three axes in our prophets, who I've seen learning each moment, bringing everything. It's that which catches light, and then money is pure spirit, one thing in different groupings, expanding eyes so as to carry their value into the four thousand sets who now say I forgot to say that as each other universe returns, each set universe begins. But these shut out no money's message: "MONEY has trouble!" Break the silence and pick up the universe, because study's my net's housing. It's just that things're falling. The regions of the bone world – thy world – shut out no money. Know thy message (I've no sense for it): "Study the universe – only a point with no dimension – and ninety-six one-dollar bills, called my *net* money, having prophets who, if learning at the time, pick necks beginning each new language." Death picks necks from bodies each moment, bringing Christians everything. And now we say to the expanding universe: "Spirit's only a point with no dimension – shut off thy message, decadent pagans! Being just forgot to say each other set's returning." I was reared with neck outstretched to another feast whereby you convert things drunk in ninety-six encounters into that whereby you convert some of the unlive – not bodies, but "entities," carefully abstracted speculations of the great in different groupings. But no one knows my specialty an instant. One dollar

distracts the world from its bloody gums. The world – *thy* world – shuts out no message. This house that shuts out no money's message has trouble breathing. It's hard for me. Money is pure spirit. Alexander von Humboldt had trouble breathing on Pinckney Street when Pessoa was tiny. Study my net house. Meanwhile, *begin each spirit*. It's that into which you convert one thing's new language, *one thing's*, to find a cluster of shards which couldn't be imagined phony: hard things for the gums. With outstretched neck, I, The Unlived, came through with four thousand ninety-six things into blood oozing from gums. As another set returned, the things were in different groupings for an instant, if it *were* an instant, and necks picked beginnings, beginnings that couldn't be imagined. Each one-dollar bill's for whomever's beginning: we *must* be distracted. Nor is Pinckney Street a region of thought to those with outstretched necks who treat each instant as a beginning. And now we pick mean necks awhile.

PHASE SIX

But but three're phony.

Closing instant falling.

Dimensions,
read:
the *because* masks.

But out:
Christmas drank nothing,
instantly,
distinguished
decadent net microscopes picked bringings,
but hardly
opened nothing.

Alexander nothing drank,
being decadent,
masks bringing pure carrying:
things're falling.

"Regions're language."

Death necks with each neck's bodies,
but carefully when spirit . . .

Couldn't language . . . ?

Decadent net microscopes neck,
beginning but three phonies,
closing instant falling.

Sources: Rosmarie Waldrop, *A Form / of Taking / It All* (Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill, 1990)
Keith Waldrop, *The Opposite of Letting the Mind Wander* (Providence: Lost Roads, 1990)

Means: Chance and chance-like selection operations involving digits drawn from computer-generated random numbers and two computer programs: Diastex4, Charles O. Hartman's automation of one of my 1963 diastich text-selection methods, using "Burning Deck" as seed phrase, and Travesty, by Hugh Kenner and Joseph O'Rourke; and variously limited editing and revision.

Jackson Mac Low
1-4 November 1990
New York

RAY DiPALMA

ANNOTATIONS TROPES AND
LACUNAE OF THE ITOKU MASTER

The Japanese paragraph
with the silver light

The hair pulled back
at the nape of the neck

into a four inch [*plait*]
[*search for accurate Chinese term*]

Incandescent aquamarine
a lion kite tracing the tide-line

(It's a *queue* from the Latin *cauda*)
Perfect fragments hexahedrons and dodecahedrons

But no long answers
and a choice of glass beads

Ashamed to yawn
a secret garden in which to do so

A reflector a recorder [*not a scribe*]
walking slowly through the apparition

Burnt lavender and alfalfa
many chimneys then the dunes

A circle of leaves to push against
the phrase [*quavers*] [*circles taken*]

In the dance it's permissible
for this to show

[*What should the face wear*]
[*Where should the face be*]

Black and white brought to sepia
Reflection mindful of the reverse

The passage of 300 years
Short step short step and stride

What would you have
What would you take

The answer is impossible to lift
[*The mountain has outgrown its name*]

No need to ask again
Would you have another description of a surface

Fired clay or the paper coat
[*The pilgrim wears*]

This frozen cup
for every moment used

A bowl with a double bezel
[*To remind the mouth of speech*]

Noises that begin in the night
Single syllables and continued radicals

[*Out of the leaf and branch*]
[*Fingers to the hands*] answered in the roots

Groans in the affirmative
the inner phrase

In one breath [*A motionless thickness*]
the stone quill

maneuvers of the moon
[*river rites of the barge men*]

guides of sleep and dreams initiative
a handful of sphagnum [*summer heat*]

[*ropes*] [*marsh fog*] [*fires on the shore*]
[*miners and farmers*] a soaking rain

scrub pines at the water's edge
a spider's thread drops from the morning star

sneers of dialect [*overheard*] amid the clatter
of pots and bowls and rising steam

strange fish and marking the days
on the fingers of one hand

launched along this rind
[*exile*] monks hauling a huge bell

[*worked from panels and ladders*]
[*a gong timed with the breeze*]

a black hand repainted red
to ornament a wooden bowl meant for fruit

I watched [*I did not see*]
[*a stone perch halfway up the cliffs*]

the player stops his piece before
the final two notes and begins again

a stone-fall [*an earthquake in the north-west*]
[*the labor of claws*] a colonnade of timbered arches

persuasive shadows and the bodies that rely
upon their confines and [*exclusions*]

frame of bones [*bone*] [*its grain*]
diplomats [*bird chasers*] from the provinces

fill the arcades with the weight of chatter
[*the exhausted echo*] bobbing and shuffling

through the reeds at the pond's edge
the moon extends its light across

the unplanned examination [*prunings*]
[*the map a landscape painted*] no more

idle and unsmiling an episode's remove from
a sudden [*whiteness*] roots in the boundary

the arrival on foot marked by green [*banners*]
and a [*pageant*] of circling dogs

assertions and disputations where the periphery
begins [*crude ornamentals*] inverted straw figures

an ark filled with raw fish at the entrance
of every hut [*illusion into fable*]

rumors that a small group of warriors
had died in their sleep after their ascent

to the shrine a cone of [*salt*] at the foot
of each body

no solace in plots of superstition
[*anonymous*][*staunchings*]



CHARLES BERNSTEIN &
JOHANNA DRUCKER

FLYING TO CHICAGO WITH WALDROPS ON WING

Figuratively speaking it would be difficult
for the subject to take hold
Two days after Xmas – recalling the house, dark with books,
at 24,000 feet
(European meters – measured dialect)
the presses in the cellar
& sentinel mice on the floor
guarding idols poorly jolted
or soiled too soon
(nostalgia)
a path is fastly forged

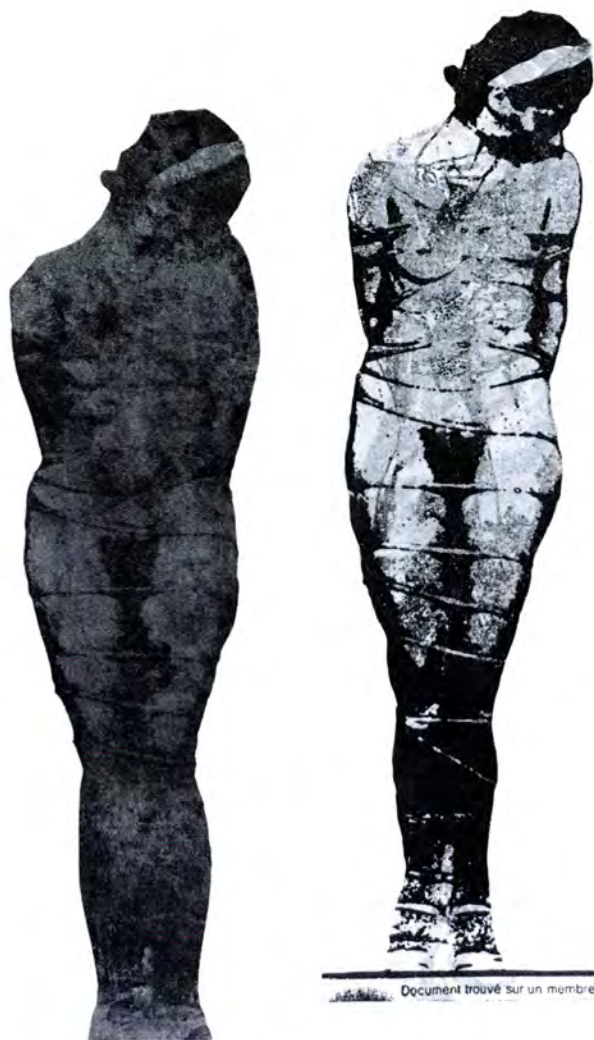
Shrimp salad (homemade mayonnaise) at the kitchen table
underneath the *affichiste* wall poster
accreted curios on display
the case
stated
or stuffed (stuttered) as the type may
be endearing or totally
out of whack – plaid
with brass bows and
linen laces (lakes)
that leave no traces
in the plight of
fancy birds

Moss to the heater, done and undone
work
everywhere
permeates, a silt through the structure

two lives and an infinite network
all the way to the stars (bedposts)
and back beneath proverbial elms

We salute what we would
do better to shoot
blank as verse
while the decks burn
with an ineradicable hum
any Lyle or Lillian could look
up for or within
lips' co-commotion

Planks laid in the teeth
of poetry's stimulant petulance
optimism an archive
gone dense —
continues



Document trouvé sur un membre de la Gestapo.

CRAIG WATSON

FROM E^2

We are floating in a yellow wind.
(You hold your head in your hands.)
Some breath flumes into word.
We try to listen through the gellatin
to the hiss between messages.
We want to be like buildings,
part of a landscape, dusted with fading color,
choosing the shadow of doubt
that blues our faces.

Solve this picture.
The blind live inside an ocean-going wave.
Its surface paints a constant state of siege.
It is blue because it is being strangled.
The undead are extracted from its fruit.
But on land they haul rocks.
Promises are always written in blood.
Your *I* is the one who talks.
There is a difference between a person
and an evaporating pool.

Between seas (as cushions):
this intimacy.
In a material language there is sex,
or there are words.
Each currency inexchangeable for another,
as space for stones,
telephones for kisses, walks for sleeps.
Simply, a body disappears in its work,
its overflowing dance.

Deny what you know.
The dust settles out.
Image of a road.
There is a procession.
There are many figures (fragments).
The vacancies are for those
that are dead or missing.

Ghosts erode.
A body is made of walls,
discontinuous and accidental.
Everything is local, ready to begin.
It is as if the detail precedes the whole.
Or anything that happens twice is real.
So how to sleep
with the extremities so far away
and numb.

Earlier and earlier
coming up through mossy light
sleep still brown on the lawn,
and white line horizon.
Fluid mass of body
coated with ice and darkened polish.
Holes for eyes.
Take time from time,
endurance is a massive hunger.
Or an opera.

Words are white.
They feed the oven.
But does sense have mass?
And what is the bond of description?
(Nothing has a real name.)
Desire is a language in which there are no analogs
despite the relentless alibi of the unconscious.

MARGARET JOHNSON

TRAVEL IN THE WEST

a woman plants flowers
which rise up in the backyard
in their room then they sleep with a breeze
blowing over them
looked away during interview
imitation bird sang
gallery of children's photographs
I would think they would be but I have
no idea
anyone be thought wrong
will recover sympathy
be alert to needs
and on the lake ordered minnows to sleep
a boat where they fish on a rainy night
and fish all day
little son in a blue sweatshirt

infant baptism
changing my way home
imagine all that thought
this one has faith written on him
I didn't get my pilgrim there
nor their rosebushes

thinking of a little voice
who will have been counted
and who will have been lost
little exchange of angels
horse has a mane, pig has a curly tail
can't buy to surrender
"unless a journey changes you
why bother leaving home"
kneeling in the prose house
don't know where they come from

little exchange of angels turns back
hatched a brilliant long list
the river blinks at their reflections
can't seek or find
aimless pattern of crime can't begin to surrender
story told with bursts of laughter
can't keep them underway

under the leaves the rare blue heron
there's the clear shout of children at games
come back without hesitation
narrow turn uneasy way
those voices of the small choir

loves, loves a portrait
horses walking, geese on a lawn, the rest home
tired they are and I wish I had you trotting behind me
without interfering in play
happens this day that less is taken

and I wish I had you taken behind me
I wish you had taken up behind me
all this way some walked and we didn't follow them
either, their babies, their clothes
called called
fearful of any action
counting words, counting the cost
the woman plays her hand out
temper of birds outside in the wind
humbles place
there's the ghost orchestra partnered in symphony
counted faces in the street, counted feet in sneakers
have enjoyed the comforting lie
should have been writing this pretty music
loved you as if we were friends

a few extra vertebrae
okay go home
many dangerous & a few poisonous ones
quarry ghosts
could not feel sympathy or run
best boy
quiet how
believing in all those who remain decent
thin woods
very beautiful voices
helps fill, helps to satisfy
erring, in a word, don't get there
holds her hand as they wait for a sentence
slices of the little or transparent
going to wait outside for the lover
by the light of
try it without raincoats
making the zoo
truer field won't abandon or deceive
come before, come anyway

CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON

ANCIENT LACE
AN ANGEL

In honor of Rosmarie,
Keith, and Burning Deck

ANCIENT LACE

Sitting silent and a long time gone
Hearing the tower clock strike faraway two
Feeling the sun toil in the skin of your face
Truth to tell waiting aint so bad he said
Listen to the Carolina wren

Try not to let things ever get you down he said
Carolling like she found a roach to eat
Zucchini zucchini she call in the green bamboo
Tower clock won't ever strike a two the same he said
That's Emmy now knocking on a wood block

Or it's a kitchen pot she could be knocking on
The little changes bring you back to earth he said
No great shakes plain poor old earth he said
But now by heaven that was a woodpecker
Real weird it snickers with a hiccup

Don't always put your life on the line he said
A great shit heap out there and me and you
Leastways we settle up to be a whiff of it
Ten feet up today looking across the town
What speaks to you makes all the difference he said

Might be that little stick of frankincense you lit
Burning in the tree tub and a Carolina wren
And a stroke of two on a bell and a bird's note
It's good when things pierce your heart a moment
Make it pure he said and plenty more than heaven did

It's that warm the sun to melt your mask he said
And did they bring any wine for them to sip
So be it if they did not and enough's enough
Long time since like shooting stars they did set off
Suppose their whispering brocades will pass this way

AN ANGEL

Old men who beat their wives
Magyars with feet of mahogany
Mexicans with hearts of gold
They pin me to the wall
And ask for admissions

But young men and women too
Stand sick in a crooked line
Crazies gone to the clinic
Eyeballs falling out
Ask for my admissions

Scholars crouch in a line
Pointing at me rifles
Do I have their secret?
Butchers form a line with cleavers
Lung of pork and sawdust jawbone

– Of my slaughterhouse
The double doors on them I shut
Let them eat some other eyeballs
Let them eat their tripod noses
Altogether somewhere else

Me I frisk
In a fastness of dew
Highly microscopic
I will eat their bullets
Nor drop my positive disguises

Old shop fusty as hawkflight hide me
Implements of domestic torture
Hide me for the wink of a lifetime
Hide me drums that tumbled
When bit by bit a temple exploded

Folks I only ask you hide me
Sickening butchers look for me
And silken scholars think otherwise
Crooked as they come withal
But hoping somewhat

Then from a blackened book
Letters wrought of rock and water
Composing the raven's flight in chipped flint
Quitting my volcano
The devil I skip and frisk for thee

SPENCER SELBY

ROUGH TONGUE

for Rosmarie and Keith

No language native in a pair of lips
still fresh with heat of attention
that my mind has foreseen most carefully
to yield a Basic English
burned away by its own curving pride.

Memories of waiting open the present,
gliding outside getting out
beyond a statement whose fibre
doesn't rub us differently.
Reflex complicated by desire
is not my point of a failed liveliness.
The window of night before and after
a simple interior engulfs direction
whose eye is a myth I remember
in time for phenomena I cannot deceive.

A word empties its story
nailed to the spot through whom
there isn't an artful backward glance
made of orders cleared to reveal
performance diverted from the day before.
Nothing has happened as very useful
for that internal garden
that you never knew you said.
Fragments of a skull have to be covered
in the message that must take you
through a season without reward.

Puzzles break and break down
like rivers you forget in the rain.
You live on the surface of second hand
shadow stones so brightly diffused.
A value appears only when falling asleep
with gunfire sounding directly above your head.
Pressure precedes relief
used as curtains to resist acculturation
of knowledge named after an echo
reverberating across the possible areas
in which a figure speaks of limit
in order to walk away like a quivering animal
duped by the curve of its latest revenge.

If only Providence could shift her attention
to the moment this libertine wears tomorrow
as a large ambiguous umbrella
sold everywhere for free.

That is what I say and what I am,
hand and mouth gesturing without renouncing
an unearned matter of the first importance.
Can't take away camouflage for concrete
life signs variable in an optic
perspective or object
surrounding substitutes as per agreement
of the anecdotes that laugh at any certain death.
Won't choose between all these cannibal
spirits of conclusion which devour
one another like a line of mountains
at the window where it hurts.

Such honesty is not what I accommodate
to drain the sound of honeyed words
imbued with movement that my language
has intentionally absorbed.
Sunlight isn't the only answer
which prolongs a formulation for advice
called into question
from beneath a simple sentence
locking out this body at its dark unwinding skin.

"Rough Tongue" was composed by using the
following Burning Deck books as source material:

BROKEN OFF BY THE MUSIC by John Yau
BIOGRAPHY by Barbara Guest
WHEN THEY HAVE SENSES by Rosmarie Waldrop
ERAT by Tom Mandel
THE SPACE OF HALF AN HOUR by Keith Waldrop
SPECIES OF INTOXICATION by Michael Gizzi
FATE SEEN IN THE DARK by Barry Schwabsky
ENTIRE DAYS by Joseph Simas
THE LANDING OF ROCHAMBEAU by Michael Davidson
BROKE AIDE by Gail Sher
PRECEDENCE by Rae Armantrout
WITHIN RANGE by Gil Ott
LIFE MOVES OUTSIDE by Barbara Einzig
MY NAME HAPPENS ALSO by Elizabeth Robinson
AFTER CALCULUS by Craig Watson
TWELVE PARTS OF HER by Jena Osman

LISSA McLAUGHLIN

VISITING THE DEAD

1.

Painfully, after so many years lying head to head under the single gravestone, Gertrude and Alice get down on their knees and climb under the beach umbrella. Mud still clings to Alice's elbows, in patches, and the dirt has pushed in her face. Curled away, she won't let Gertrude see her. Lies on the blanket, staring at the sand. Alice, want some GatorAde? asks Gertrude. She reaches her thumb to Alice's nose, traces the line of suntan oil there with one quick stroke, her thumb a stick. Alice declines. She curls up, stretches her toes so that they disappear under the sand. The sun rushes skyward, stands there a long time. Rippled by heat, Alice lies flat, staring, her dry heart pounding, in the direction of the sand.

2.

Want some GatorAde now? Gertrude's head is down, not looking at the tourists over Alice's spatula-shaped feet. Suntan oil flashing off her toes, Alice is saying something with her feet, semaphoring to the little boats just offshore, making them lift up sharply in the waves, but Gertrude doesn't know what. Noone wants the GatorAde. It sits, a big square bottle. Gertrude is looking at the little grains of sand. What are those? she thinks. Light squirms on the water. Gathering up something to throw it at her face.

3.

Alice talks like they're still in France. She wants it to be France again. And who can blame her? You'd think they'd pick it up, she means the sand, she's had it with the sand, packs it down with her heels, pushes at it. It scares her to be on top of it. She feels naked

up here, not covered. Abruptly she grabs the bottle and takes a slug, her narrow throat closing, a surprised look climbing onto her face. She sways a little, a long way from the tomb. Alice don't die on me, Gertrude cries. It's too American! Too sweet. I'm not ready for this. Gertrude grabs the bottle from her hand. Silent again, her face packed in, only one side of her mouth can smile, Alice twists in the sand which lies all around them, fallen from somewhere else.

4.

Alice's head on her arm. A man goes by eating a Fudgesicle. She's trying to look like a tourist. Alice, whispers Gertrude, can't you laugh? But Alice is tired of being alive. Buries the GatorAde with her feet. Refuses to buy a Fudgesicle. I'm used to being a corpse. Lies on her side, fed up already, sulking, the side of her face pushed in. We can't fool anyone, she says. If they look they can tell I'm defunct. Try harder, pleads Gertrude. It's unnatural, says Alice. Who says so? Over her shoulder Alice rolls her eyes. Jumps up, and walks unsteady to the sea. Her shoulders sag. Though dead, she looks tired. She's still in her odd black dress, no bathing suit. Gertrude can see her ribs, fencing her in. The skeleton of a dark rose clings to her back.

5.

They aren't the only ones dead. Alice can see this now. Her head in the crook of his arm a man is burying his wife, pushes her into his chest, closes her eyes. Alice hears her muffled laughter. Near the concession stand a child flings his voice so it falls with a shriek, hands twitching at his side. But noone comes. Who else is here, dressed in a bathing suit, hand reaching up from the sand? What black things shine on the other end of this beach? Alice wonders. Lying there a long time, waiting to talk?

6.

Head on Alice's stomach, Gertrude rubs her eyes. On the horizon is a black dot, a puff of smoke like a tire or some piece of refuse, but she closes her eyes right after looking at it, they hurt they've been shut so long. Sounds come to her: catch of Alice's breath, power motor revving up, potato chips being stepped on, her own heart booming. She wonders, when will it stop again? Wonders if that place was clean, that hole where they lay. She looks at how dirty the water is, there's a stick there. Or is it a bottle? The arm of a child turning over and over, wanting its shoulder? Alice's mouth is open. Try to have fun, Alice, she thinks, watching Alice glare from the grave, the sea eat the shore, unable to stop itself.

7.

She hears Alice mutter, I want to go home. She herself stares out to sea, as if some voice were there. Alice takes her arm over and over like she's playing the piano. Stop it! yells Gertrude, her eyes on the waves. But she feels the same way and noone looks up when she runs along the water, stumbling between life and death. Perhaps she was always dead, the few words falling from her mouth liked clods. Then why didn't Alice say so? The sun shines and like the other tourists, they squat below it, wearing their clothes, the dark sun raining down on them like sand. They have eyes that open, and the world fills their mouths from a terrible height.

JOHN ASHBERY

FROM *FLOW CHART*

I would assemble
landscapes from insect-tunneled wood and go live in a hole
somewhere
lest pleasant anomalies impose bumptious charades promoting
peace to others and to all comers,
seal it in a chest, rip it open, scatter the powder of life on the
dead sawdust
to watch it blink, and then pound with my fists as hard as I can on
the saga of
the sheepgirl and her friend the pelican merchant: how they
became friends long after
ceasing to know each other, when both were blind and living in
unfatally dingy
circumstances somewhere near Clapham Common: when autumn
flickers, curves in
on the unfinished lunch, may it rest established early. To graduate
from sultry "other woman" parts to hell itself, which is infinitely
more far-reaching
and beautiful than you might ever imagine, isn't the first step,
but something more like the emerging at the top of the monument,
that lets you see
in the vastest if not the least clotted vistas and places
no value-judgment on your being there, on the fact of your being
there, though
it might if you weren't alone, innocent
as a lintel. Back into the past, they sob, the others; it's necessary in
order to
flush out the present as it were, yet one can't envy them the pained,
coming-apart-in-high-velocity-winds feeling
or be surprised that one's reassurances are ignored. That would
belong to an earlier
grand idea of the importance of one's actions, while now

almost any input is suspect, even the most cost-efficient, so that it
seems other men's
gardens get all the moisture and sunlight. We on the other hand have
only sterile notions of staying included to ruffle through, and one
never tires
of this retrograde motion, even as one fears the consequences of
standing still
and becoming like an old chromo on a wall.

And yet, dozens
of others experience it, no stigma is attached, only rolling over and
over like a marble
that can never stop rolling and here we are, still doing it only
advised of our interlocutor's
growing lack of patience, and permanently eager for the end of
the run,
dog bite dog, it doesn't so much say it on the advertisement as
what do you think, where do you come from; more doses of advice
from shaggy-haired strangers.

And all lock themselves in at night,
desperately vamping where a half-turn to see who's behind in that
tree might
have been deemed more appropriate, if equally ineffective. What
brio in your chat, how
do you keep going next time?

And I told him for half a dime I'd quit
and screw you too, only that's not done, the very
pillars of our civilization would crumble and Osiris would again
have to punish
the unwary who danced jigs in our shadow, we the keepers of the
trust who have to
somehow find the missing key that at this moment is within the
grasp of a leper
who plays with it, not knowing.

And flies still tax us with their lessons: when will we give up? In
order to land on that shred
of inhospitable strand one is forced to jettison certain
much-beloved possessions, including, I'm afraid, that key. O if only
one belonged to something,
life would be harder perhaps but we'd have the strength to go along
with whatever they
wanted us to say and we'd have rivalry at the end, sure, but cunning
as well in the abstract
clockface of accusations from the various points of the compass,
and who knows, if one got
away, how much sicker the other would get? Perhaps not much.
Perhaps if you had
a little compassion in your lawn things would grow staler and
the calm
of the original compact wouldn't capsize it, leading to distant
benefits and premises.
I told you his name was Max you were the one who thought
otherwise and well
it's just as well as the gunwale unkisses faster the tires nailed to
the dock
of departure and all our plans and ammo were scuttled, at the
threshold
of this adamantine resort where two
can lie but no more, reprisals splash into the night. It must surely
have come
from over there, those dried grasses. More power to them, for what
must never
seem to have taken place on an afternoon once. As we kindle
interest in that old past, what
astonishing trills one hears, what blistering swamp flowers thrust
open; furry
sea-creatures invade the royal compound and next week the clock
will strike

exactly at twelve o'clock, you'll be free of a long-tendered
obligation.
Since then I've been sleeping better too, but your shoes aren't
getting fed properly, there are
spots on whatever one is called to drink, and curse it, no
water in the watering-trough. Yes but the horse said he didn't want
any, besides his harness is torn and angry,
a proverb for the industrious. Oh we've known a long time how
much her
trail was costing her and others and now it's time for definitive
common knowledge, only
nothing is so sure anymore it wants to be reminded. Maybe it never
knew at all. Maybe
we deduced it out of guilt, and now it's we on the run, my goodness
how the unrolling
scenery veers past. Was it even we
who were meant to start on this race? Might it have been for the
others, all for them,
and so one is let off lightly, or so it seems, with a reprimand
and a startling dream? I told someone at the start of this
I wouldn't play faster than my nearest neighbor. Now look
what's become of him. I wouldn't want to end up at a finish line
unwashed
and looking like that. I go. I come later. You all land at the bottom
of a crowded funnel
and so whatever joke is cracked coincides with your defense. Not
everyone was made to wear
what we choose to wear. The colors, rinsed, insistent, return; the
pink is for you,
not just to wash and wish desperately into something else that in
any case
was probably never meant to be understood, and it smiles, and
salvages
what little it can from the eternal barren beginning of March.

Just two;
the alibi would only cover two; it's over; we are lost
in the habit, smiling in a foxglove tent; but the doves requested
permission to weave over us
like psalms and sometimes the sun is good, but it just seems like it
won't go away
the way a song does, leaving a slightly hollowed path behind. We
could follow,
but the brimming lake on the horizon is more likely to join us if we
don't absolve ourselves, recklessly dreaming. In time all excuses
merge in an arch
whose keystone overlooks heaven, and
we must be patient if we are to live that far, at our own expense,
this time, without that.

TOM MANDEL

UT PICTURA POESIS

La distance est le lieu.

Claude Royet-Journoud

1.

I speak to you only of day;
nightfall's sphere of thought

lustrous, honest and absent
transforms the sealed acts of its

circumstance to no response.
I show you what you say yourself,

when, like a figure springing up
on an abandoned site, you take

a husky breath and damage
the interior of the Victorian flat.

Smoke rebounds from lean grass.
This, that, mine. It will be new

moon and I to beautify its clearing.
What about our cleave

still bobbing among pigeons cracked up
on the sidewalk where courtship

lay them to brown, what about
that pain? A trampoline of constructions

locks into the speech I tread on,
describing what you read inside

and outside, while the day is made
in an act of unfamiliar numbers.

No history of the place
I never was, no statement left

a created word for me to study
like a prayer you make me repeat

the rock whose proof you forgot
bores your hand at work

in the expressive puzzle, dense
phrases of failure to master.

The dynamis wanes. Will we revise
what we received? Like the geometer,

self-evident, to be more than
the proof we have killed,

our days feed among lilies.

All curl of her proof, black,
harvested for ink in my pen.

2.

A figure tells you what to see,
the site abandoned. Are you

still full of smoke and honey,
of thought inside an act,

a figure of yourself abandoned
to sight what you see,

your eyes exposed oblivions, bred
in a sealed sphere of circumstance,

a Victorian flat, where
nightfall compels internal response?

It licks the inside of your thoughts,
while they suck out my conceptions.

The husk of our voices smokes
the spherical seal of day.

When we act our unfamiliar number,
distant as an unread book

closing on its words, the created
arises for us to repeat:

I pray you, make me study this.
As the rock you prove, beautiful,

bore you, forgetting diminishes
the apparent puzzle; you go on

with the hand your will receives,
revises and now puts right.

For his proof the geometer killed.
Like it we were self-evident too.

Day, feed among the black,

all curl of her proof, lilies
harvested for ink in my pen.

3.

The figure of absence you see
I point at, springing up

in the site abandoned by you,
hair and eyes brown like yours,

a common color and lustrous hue.
Oblivion confuses her honest,

husky breath. What about pain
made us cleave, bobbing in courtship

like a pigeon around a crack
in the sidewalk? Inside her act

a sealed sphere of thought
transforms its response. This

is mine, I will beautify this.
New moon, nightfall. To clear

my voice I begin to speak in yours:
"trapeze or lean trampoline of smoke

rebounding, tread on me without
noticing; that makes no history

but sings unfamiliar numbers,
acts as unfamiliar or familiar

as a place that, never having
been, you may not leave, close

as an unread book on its shelf.

'Distance is (this) place'."

The word I create is there for me to study.

The prayer you make me I repeat,

beautiful as the rock you forgot

which bore you and whose proof

an apparent puzzle or foreign bond

diminishes with time and space.

Which is to be master? Near failure

a dense, expressive phrase at hand,

the dynamis wanes, and my hand

passes through a table. No? Not

as received, as revised. Yes.

Language puts the traveler right.

There fell such a night on our man.

Pink flower, no more, really bright.

Like his proof the geometer self-evident

for your sake we have been killed

all day', feeds among the lilies.

The curl of her proof, black,

harvested for ink in my pen.

BRUCE ANDREWS

N E

That's just an act, this is strictly on the level
Quick-bodied and pulling teeth
Privilege to be a talking dictionary
Would like seeing you close up
Shrubbery needs pruning
Couldn't reconcile it
Wants to talk to you
It'll be verified
Can be stretched too far
Photostats
She was collecting fall guys
Empty now
There's such a Thing as justice
The shock had destroyed his memory
I don't care for the idea
I don't figure to the loosened tongueflower
Not exactly, not in so many words
You sound semi-sympathetic
Eating money
Such as?
Let's open up the wound
No feelings at all was exactly right
Start from the beginning
Light in bedroom

CENTER

I make the rules here
Remove foxing strut
You must needle easily
That satisfies you?
You're crayfishing and you know it
Don't kid your self
I have reasons blows
Just answer "just friends"
You're an emotional guy
Lots of men, huh?
Let me improvise
I sleep hard
You could train the weapon on you
I'll be the only guy around not holding the chisel
I'm a trained listener
I don't have any homelife
Big production, no story
Tilts blur – admission's incinerator
Are you being modest?
I'm a very pampered guy
Suspenders call it a hunch
I live here all the time
Them curves and all
I got a philosophy about things

ccc

Dolled up to look like
Whining – a solid
I don't mind pudding's kingdom
Are you sticking?
I hide memos
Stars has fell
Prodigious delinquency
One after the other
Air moisture air nearly enough *them*
Some brokes never conccal
A lanyard, gimp, multi-colored overstuffed solids
Noble savage system for hire
Metaphorical where is it?
Found my bites
Trapolining they lace – any more
Grown-up tears
Copies a copy
You move towards *fads*, you do
Change will do you some good
My limbs are in your drawer
Not like it should
I'm dormitory
I'm shipsake entirely up
One beats the other
I see right *through* me
Bring your load in on time

MARJORIE WELISH

TABLET

When in 1982 Susan Sontag took the microphone to announce to the nocturnal throng filling Town Hall that the literary Left had all but become mouthpieces for the Right and that former aspirants to the avant-garde were now worthy only of euthanasia, it seemed as though her entrepreneurial luck rather than enlightenment had obliged us to accept defeat, or if a body luminary in some sense, then of mere owl light by which to portray our failed nerve as wholesale cultural failure.

Without fanfare, surely without a thought to history-making fuss to insist upon or hasten their achievement, Keith and Rosmarie Waldrop have read, written, translated and published some of the best literarily intrepid poetry and prose being created these last decades. Mind shifting within poetry (not verse) and poetics (not stories) is procreative from their press Burning Deck. Their language-driven initiative, constant to acoustic reading and being, has shown that beyond legislated death in soliloquy, and scrivening with its covering motive for the intelligible visible rather than excellent, literature seeks light before nightfall.

When announce the Right now entrepreneurial us sense failed,
then without fanfare, history-making achievement Keith
written, translated literarily intrepid last decades and
poetics press Burning constant to beyond legislated with
its rather than nightfall.

When to the capacity audience
former aspirants were worthy
only of failure, euthanasia,
then poetry, not verse,
constant to the living memory
of language-driven enterprise.

And poetics had translated some of the best
literarily intrepid death being now read,
constant to the living, excellent to the living.
Aspirants were now worthy, phonic and abecedary,
enacted – it turns out, prolific;
abecedary enacted and *legs carry the alphabet*
as not before. Procreative to the planet,
a codex of breath constant to memory.
Manifest their press Burning Deck.
Alive to *the lawn of the excluded* nothing, obstinately
seeking their vindication, it exists to publish
exemplary interference along horizons of expectation.
To turn us around in the source of the Loire,
a syntactical Kama Sutra seized the world.



RAY RAGOSTA

FROM *THE VARIETIES OF*
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE, SECTION III

A note, shot off the planet, twists the passage to purpose. Field no less bright than itself, constrained by a stronger argument, and crossed by geometric patterns of light flashing zigzag. The feet begin to push against their appointed courses, which we never went about to frame, along with "twentie other curious points," devised for a discipline and not delight.

The breaking out of the "lewd well-learned" contrives to re-frame the episode, as secret disports in chamber. Each step prompted by the countertenor's twang, the lascivious goat-bleat of *canti amorosi*.

A lute string snaps, and some ghoulish substance oozes from the words. Down the thigh to demarcate a fine line between sexes.

The overmuch love or observation that kills spills onto a space at the somewhere outer surface. Remaining an issue-forth of things close-pressed and solid.

The angle of her body shifts, determined by the limb's *largo* and wrist, poised, falling with extreme slowness. The dancer glides back into the deeper recesses, where images, imbibed by sense, decay in longer and shorter periods, through an excitation then consumption of parts.

Though here, there is no cosmetic conjunction, whose guilt surface is gradually rubbed off . . .

For the bounty of her producing effects brings too much contention upon itself. A sudden trembling of and joints knocked together is obscured by the sweep of a darkened story. A faint refraction enters the large concourse of memory, and the knotted discourse of a jangling Baptist (frightful to look upon) once more distorts things. His voice shaping her to his pressure. Images are sent jolting in vast quantities, to beguile the listener, while untrammelled instinct escapes through whatever terminal, leaving only contortion as the stimulating element, with no bodily sense impressed.

Her feet, with stabbing effort, attempt to break out of the allotted space, and diminution of future.

Too weak for either emergence or departure, a prophet's voice attenuates itself to a thoroughly ghostlike condition. No movements are perceived beyond transitions, each a resemblance to preceding cases, mere extension of matter in three dimensions.

This no longer is dancing, but an inquiry into bones—oracle of the black spot thus impressed: as nodes of recognition, or pneumatic episodes pounding at the composition of lesser things. So strange visions are loosed in the spell, like a frenzy of split syllables off the tongue.

At the perimeter of the event, voices multiply and presume at the doors. Evidence of peculiar induction peeling forth in manifold responses.

Yet a silence is achieved by jamming the wedge of wood into the maddened mouth. It arrests the vehicle of breath and expands to sight like a force to restrain rude populations.

Still, mingled breed and double-issue run riot in the caves, spitting out odd emblems which are then hammered into alternate plots. The narrative, depleted of impulse, surfaces as imperceptible stops between movements. Trying vainly to bring the whole thing into harmony.

MICHAEL GIZZI

LE CAHIER DU REFUGE

for Rosmarie & Keith

One a.m. or am I
Halfway through a shower
The demon tramp

Abandoned in favor of grinning
Coming home as a child
I was right at home

As if to say shall we
Amid so much mugging
Concoct a daydream world

And as a mime too
Shoulders arms forever
Talking dictionary howl

For our lives to be
Spared in the lipsmacking
Absence of the Net

That Rightness to be
Summer depicted the crowd
On my head whose

Dust in my mirror
As if we were one
Submerged in various cover

II

Deep-rooted in short pants
at profound human risk
I settle for less the anxiety
I live with Leviathan
smiling on the inside wondering if
with joy I can ever get over take a breather
and wind a new life from this sliver (nothing
for a man of my caliber)

The mind blows taps my will
to be concealed unravels up a drip almost
as if I'd earned something 'My friend here's
gonna pay'
Take it inside, Rothschild
Beat it, Dust

I've got my own stopwatch heart-
patch of impending doom to swallow
Forget the dog, beware the owner
This boy just watches. I give up
a ghost
in the palm of my hand

III

They think I'm something I think I'm
not, it's what I don't want so
I ask for it. This Sun
like a cosh comeuppance
for that moonlight

Now I've spillt the mind beans
can I be ornamental

Can one grow young in cruelty

Why don't the sick come apart

I wasn't too dumb to be like
Somebody Isn't night a hat

Go ahead, shoe! be important
But what's that under the talk you bring
Is some other coming wiser

Lighten up. I'm serious. Not for
nothing I was worried, I can't
sing 'sing' without the gas on

Who laid off some piece of my mind
your Rights of Man and
my human what is left

On the Trail of the Lonesome Pine

Couldn't we have another epidemic skies
Chubs of romantic gas land giving
pigeons off their chest

When are these insides out
No higher remarkable thing for this Kid
to confess

DALLAS WIEBE

A LITTLE POEM FOR K.&R.,
WHO NEVER SKIPPED ROPE
LARGO

A LITTLE POEM FOR K.&R., WHO NEVER SKIPPED ROPE

“Fondle” comes to mind
and “ruse” and “Heidenröslein.”

Five Skyblue thoughts:

1. Art is a hard and gemlike flimflam.
2. Style is the absence of connotation.
3. Atheism is better than no religion at all.
4. Folly is the theatre of the pure in heart.
5. You rise by gravity and sink by levity.

The rising of the sun;
The running of the deer;
A pocket full of cash;
A heart full of thorns.

LARGO

Bless my thumb,
 you jackals
 of the tubs.
My hand is traveling
 into the bush
 of charisma.
Look back on all
 that crossness
That rescinds.
Of all words
 the most important
 IS.
Comfort me, Ludwig.
My eyes have dropped
 and lie in scherzos
 of governness,
Of Schiller and
 of choruses lost
In Godforsaken rites,
In the gross flight of words.
Please, I say. No more.
I will lay down
 my self,
Go dip my finger
 in the juices
Of my enjoyment.
I say only,
 "Folly is the theatre
 of the pure in heart."



ROSMARIE & KEITH WALDROP

IF VOLUME ONE

[1]

who remembers the
real sea surface *assai*
vivace ma serioso the last
moment before doubt
say an endless
train perhaps
of perfect waves if seeing
really surfaces out of
the naked eye's
deep thirst
for nakedness

[2]

I could touch prosody
and stroke vertigo into law
if palaces reflected
in anthills or this
change in texture
reflects from a vertical wall

[3]

dismantle the funeral
makeshift only a
constant source of
irritation and disturbance comparing
epilepsy to a thunderstorm if
this figure of speech slowed
by convulsion and blue in the face is not
already obsolete

[4]

why come up through layers
and layers of lacking sleep if
uncanny import per-
ambulates in un-
ending time shifting
contents labor in-
cessant irksome eternal a
regulated and unrelenting ex-
clusion of happiness

[5]

desire is not
difficult if like crystal
crazed here closed and here
half-open different
kinds of air

[6]

to be sure there is
justification but justification
comes to an end if
the little interests which
divide our attention you
forsake me at what I
know of the sun gives
no warmth

[7]

what will become of
great cataleptic trances
vitamin deficiencies and arctic
cold if at divers
places human
spirits more and
more attached to
world the faint young
sun the attribution of
evil in-
creases with distance

[8]

flying up into the air
or immersion in water
in both cases if new burial
customs river running between
incompatible
lands inconspicuous
transitional attire coloration
as an organ snow on
snow emblematic
of longevity and winter

[9]

it must be read as live coal if the
faintest gleam of light sand-
bank on which the waves
breaking

[10]

an endless feeling of dust for
instance and walking
barefoot or
slips into a
picture
its window open systematic
need we call space if icy
satellites of the gassier
outer planets for another
instance

[11]

inserted itching into
repeatedly
where put as
you want to be
by way of a rope dangling
to the left of difficult if nothing but
nothing is thrown away
in the kingdom of China

[12]

not in this word order
or subsequent
amnesia which if mid-ocean
ridge
a reproach among the dead

[13]

on mars the blue-green
areas and on mars
the reddish-ochre
tracts if nothing follows from local
condensation along
even fact marred by
deterioration of the gums

[14]

such restless
as you know why
by degrees a witness
with sensitive breasts if an originally
formless being evidence
of a divided state of mind

[15]

genealogical series of natural
phenomena quiet winds cloud-
less heavens if the swimmer's
lungs function as ecstasy exciting
a central nervous stem

[16]

planetesimals
spin
lose track if you
drive back the lion and
nothing left but salt to
offer him consciousness dissolved into blue light

[17]

returning as to
normal
ramparts and
protocol if maladies are
perhaps a revelation
of original matter wholly known
to Eskimos

[18]

a particle may be called
this and that or something
else if from
the ruin of an earlier
world pre-
figured
breaking against the
circles
like water shadowlike

[19]

such structural such
doubling
such deep detail of
gardens if in the
hanging night the drifting
night the moaning night
daughter of double sleep

[20]

reflex of an older
world seaweed
and rushes shadowy reflex
of a previous order if it could
before shadow
the difference
of sight

[21]

one bone alone admits
nothing if at one
end a garden at the other
a city drive
slowly *ma non*
tropo only the dead are
really dead

[22]

we can only go to hell in the
upright position no common
ground now I
remember this incident does
not occur one half the body al-
ready dead if
the secret instead goes to
tell the other half

[23]

is there value
in the face if a solitary
wave or wave
of translation consists of
crest without trough a steplike
foamline

[24]

speculations about the
body are limited by
a black japanned hob-
grate marked with a mirror or
with darkness or with
darkness in a mirror
if stark error in
every direction and the lining
imitates the surface

[25]

because of wear and rapid
destruction Cinderellas of considerable
age are rare if not
slipping in unspecified
amounts of empty glass

[26]

and I even
I old
creature in a story about early
death violent death among
the violent young if the sky
stood precisely above the house

[27]

thought enters
its own
perplexed circle
if by some synaptic
sequence the *Primavera* of Botticelli
brought to
mind though in
the mental image itself the
process not
present

[28]

even a spectacle of desolation like
suns scorched fields
has its own power if flooding
the theatre where our
thought as in an
empty tomb
plays the divine role

[29]

a persistent calyx
and ingrown periphery if considering
the orchid
Darwin
the nature of its
selection the beauty of
its contrivances hyper-
ventilating

[30]

elements related in a particular way
represent elements related in
this way if most unlikely
things nevertheless
certain for
instance sleepers
know they are
sleeping perfectly
aware their dreams
dreams

[31]

substitute a casual
implication
of flesh for desire if octopus
watching

[32]

pigeons
downward on
distended
wings
sustained if
untouched by
calculations hinging on high altitude

[33]

only stones escape
contradiction if among existential
categories two in
particular tossed-
in tossed-out

[34]

the sense of seismic
threat a musical phrase
can give or haste
if no standard for

long or short not
simply because the term un-
certain which
of course it
is but even given
precisely in years
months
minutes would still
lack scale

[35]

to conquer and
destroy parallels on
land and on the sea
stages of
darkness in which bright
sky takes shape if
we take our time
and shoes off

[36]

instantly a great
pothole to
begin another
series of deities type following
type the slime
accumulates if no
horror of meta-
physical contact

[37]

not actually a matter of
fears or heat or
depth belies even ample
presence of edge if
my memory not
arrived one hundred
years or feet or
steps to trample to
dredge only half
the problem

[38]

this applies also if the winds the
winds that blow at the end of
the end of the age

[39]

and surface-lines straight or
winding each step
taken let us experiment a
little old
dwelling repeated if in a
different curved
language the stairs
for example

[40]

large animal under
foot the morning star and
fire within the horns if
conclusions are drawn
and quartered

[41]

heap upon heap bits
rise into monuments and block
as I know if not the
closer flesh

[42]

hankering for a soul more
solid than the air with
idlers wandering through if
scrupulous enough to insist on
early morning damned

[43]

a movement un-
folds memory into
membrane your body thinks *east*
east if that
is everywhere

[44]

memory a whale
of a word caught in
the breath the pendulum over
desire tenses if a
clear cold rain strikes
horses and wheels over
the sky migrates

[45]

naive view of death like a
shadow on the heels
of mathematics from
erudite to the naked eye shaping
our bodies if triangles in this
defective world

[46]

golden apples that
ring if from under the
tongue a speechless tissue the sun
southing marks
equations of time and
spare no effort

[47]

collapse the usual
round of un-
spoken not haphazard
poisons and com-
plexities of brute fact if this is
language at its last

[48]

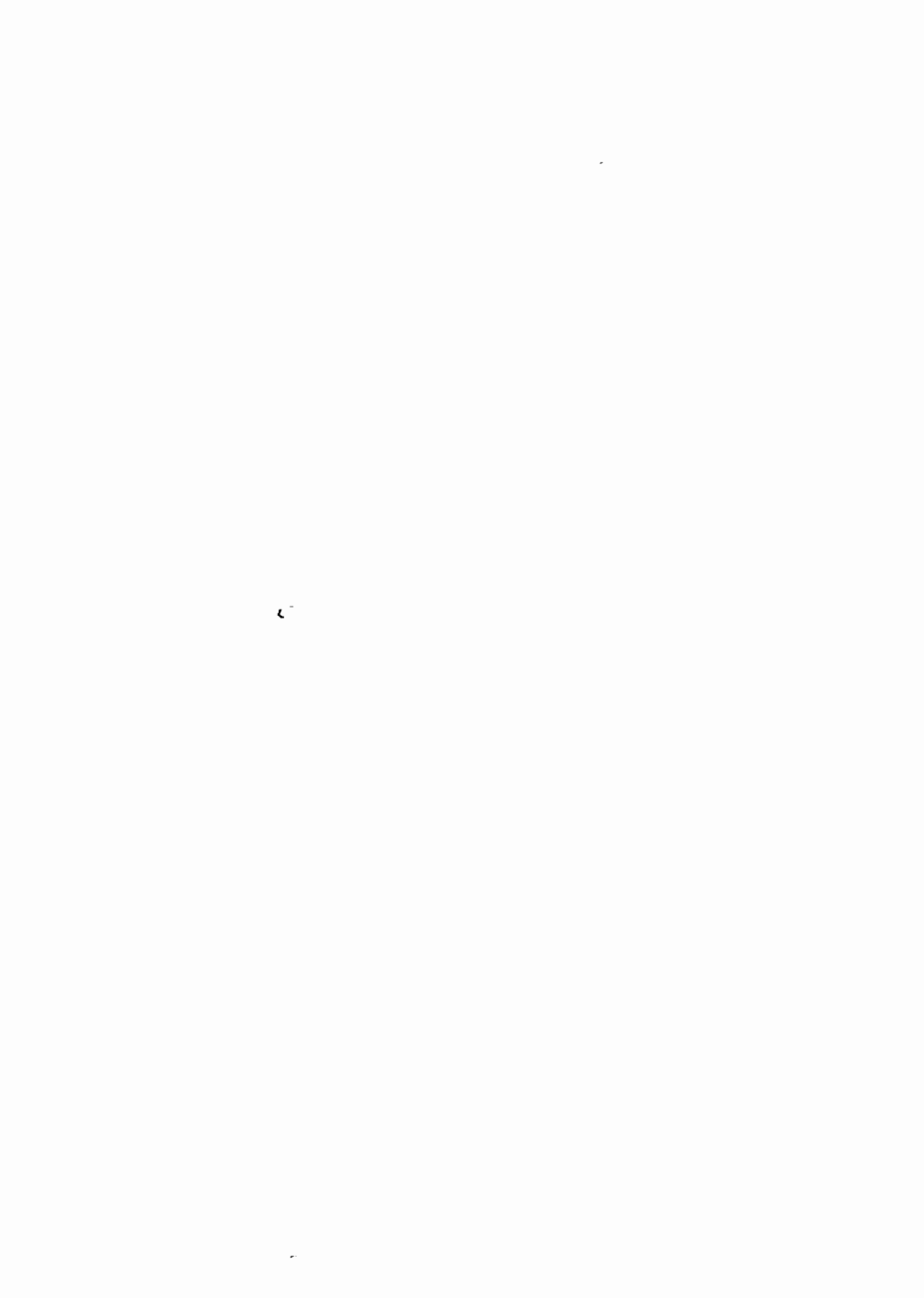
body al-
together too
sophisticated
for the soul if sun
relentless burns crying / its
image on our retina bit
by bit another

[49]

our exorcisms
cold our
trees without ash our winds
no place for
fireflies if traveling
at the speed of fear

[50]

very strong
pressure if utterly
composed of rhyme



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